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The redefining far-right extremist activism along Islamophobic lines

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Abstract

Anti-Muslim racism is increasingly becoming a prominent feature of far-right extremist groups and political figures across Europe and North America. This article examines the growth of Islamophobic discourse and actions among far-right political figures and street protest movements in Europe, focusing on the UK, France, and Netherlands, as well as in North America, particularly, Canada and the US. This paper will demonstrate that anti-Muslim racism, over other forms of racism, is increasingly defining the policies of these political elites, and occupies the foremost area of concern for these protest movements. This form of 'Othering' through racial and political posturing can have potentially devastating implications for Muslims living in western nations and can result in such things as targeted legislation, hate crimes, and social marginalization.

Key Words: Islamophobia; far-right extremism; anti-Muslim racism in Europe; Anti-Muslim racism in North America; political extremism

Introduction

Anti-Muslim bias and hatred dates back to the early inception of the Islamic faith in the Arabian Peninsula. When Islam was confined to the city of Makkah, it was opposed by the ruling elite, the Quraysh. As Islam expanded beyond the borders of Makkah, it was opposed by a number of tribes within Madinah and beyond. When Islam grew into an imperial superpower, it was confronted by European Christendom, among other rival empires. Throughout the period of colonialism and thereafter, the Orientalist gaze became prominent in the works of European academics, chroniclers, writers, and artists (Said, 1979), which arguably continues to persists through variant manifestations (Kumar, 2012). Much of the anti-Muslim racism and bias in the present context has been referred to by some as Islamophobia. According to Allen (2010) Islamophobia is an

> ideology, similar in theory, function and purpose to racism and other similar phenomena, that sustains and perpetuates negatively evaluated meaning about Muslims and Islam in the contemporary setting in similar ways to that which it has historically…that inform and construct thinking about Muslims and Islam as Other. Neither restricted to explicit nor direct relationships of power and domination but instead, and possibly even more importantly, in the less explicit and everyday relationships of power that we contemporarily encounter, identified both in that which is real and that which is clearly not" (p.190).

This type of 'Othering' of Muslims has increasingly become focal points of consternation amongst far-right extremist movements in Europe and North America. This paper discusses how far-right extremist groups in Europe and North America have become increasingly vocal against Islam. In many cases, they have defined themselves exclusively in opposition to Islam and Muslims. This paper examines the growth of Islamophobic rhetoric and actions among far-right political figures and street protest movements in Europe, focusing on the UK, France, and Netherlands, as well as North America, particularly, Canada and the US. This paper will demonstrate that anti-Muslim racism, over other forms of racism, is increasingly defining the policies of these political elites, as well as occupy the foremost area of trepidation for these protest movements. That is not to say that anti-Muslim racism has become the exclusive concern of the far-right, rather it is increasingly becoming a focal point for these individuals and groups.As anti-

Muslim discrimination is a growing phenomenon in European and North American societies (Kundnani, 2014; Kumar, 2012; Sheehi, 2011), these far-right anti-Muslim movements and political figures develop a broader appeal, thus further legitimizing anti-Muslim racism in the public discourse, while seemingly normalizing far-right protest movements and anti-Muslim political rhetoric.

My analysis of Islamophobia in this article attends to a critical race theory lens. Critical race theory is a theoretical approach in which race and racism is a starting point for analysis. From this perspective, "racism is defined as a structure embedded in society that systematically advantages Whites and disadvantages people of color" (Sherry Marx, 2008, p. 163). Critical race theorists believe that racism is ingrained in society. It is considered a 'normal' condition and not something anomalous. The overall goal of critical race theory is to dismantle systemic inequalities in society through problematizing and focusing on dominant ideologies associated with race (Marx, 2008). I turn now to discuss the growth of far-right extremism in Europe and North America.

Far-Right Extremist Views in the West

Far-right political parties in European and North American societies are not a new phenomenon. As Golder (2016) notes, far-right parties have formed coalition governments in Finland, Austria, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, as well as other European nations. However, the surge of popularity of far-right views, particularly within Western politics, over the past decade has brought about some cause for concern. According to Golder (2016) the fastest growing party family in Europe is the far-right party family. In other words, far-right political parties are the fastest growing type of political affiliation in Europe. A similar trend is occurring in the North American context with the emergence of conservative and far-right politicians gaining prominence in Canada and the US.

Far-right ideologies, particularly in the realm of politics have increasingly been defined along the lines of radicalism, extremism, populism, and nationalism (Golder, 2016). 'Radical' in this sense, refers to views that are anti-establishment, or challenging to the 'system', whereas, 'extremist' views are those, which oppose democratic processes all together (Golder, 2016). The notion of 'populism' asserts that society is divided into two camps, the "pure people" and "the corrupt elite" (Mudde, 2004). Here, the "pure people" are an imagined group (Anderson, 1991), that possess characteristics and qualities that represent the masses, whereas the

"corrupt elite" include establishment political parties, media, and intellectuals, who celebrate liberal values, internationalism, and multiculturalism. Furthermore, populism can be exclusionary, marginalizing cultural, religious, and ethnic minorities (Golder, 2016), as these groups do not possess the imagined qualities of the "people". 'Nationalism' is a term in politics, which denotes a strong relationship between the state and nation (Mudde, 2007). Nationalism can manifest in various forms. For example, civic nationalism promotes the idea of a homogeneous state in which people choose to be citizens through accepting common values and cultural practices. In contrast, ethnic nationalism asserts that one's belongingness to a nation is dependent upon one's ethnic origins, and is therefore exclusionary in nature. Aspects of populism and nationalism, when examined from a critical race perspective shed light on Thobani's (2007) notion of *exaltation.*

Exaltation is the process of attributing certain imagined qualities which characterize the nationality of a people. Those who do not embody these qualities are considered strangers to the national community. As Thobani mentions, "national subjects who fail to live up to the exalted qualities are treated as aberrations...The failings of outsiders, however, are seen as reflective of the inadequacies of their community, of their culture, and, indeed, of their entire 'race' (p. 6). Those qualities exalt them over others and in essence define who gets to be a 'real' westerner. When a national subject is unable to live up to these exalted qualities they are perceived as exceptions to the rule. Those who do not fit within the mould of the national subject (i.e. members of immigrant communities and people of colour) are believed to be strangers who do not truly belong within the nation. Another useful frame for understanding how far-right extremism is becoming increasingly Islamophobic in nature is the notion of 'Othering'.

'Othering' signifies how individuals and groups have been constructed as divergent and deviant from what is considered 'normal'. 'Otherness' is "the condition or quality of being different or "other," particularly if the differences in question are strange, bizarre, or exotic" (Miller, 2008, p. 587). Often the concept of 'Other' is represented as a diametrically opposed 'self'. Hence, designating a group or individuals as 'Other' not only defines that group or individuals but also defines the 'self' as its antithesis. 'Other', as I have employed the term, is a conception designated by a hegemonic subject which mystifies and fetishizes an object (Said, 1979). In other words, 'Othering' involves an obscuring and demonization of the 'Other'. In this article, 'Othering' is a process which constructs subjects outside the nationalist space. The nationalist space refers to a conception of the nation, which

nationalist subjects envision possessing spatial power over (Hage, 2000). The 'Othering' of Muslims through a western lens has been described at length in Said's (1979) prominent work *Orientalism.*

Orientalism was a critique of western scholarship, which viewed a homogeneous Arab world as the object of the European gaze. According to Said (1979), Orientalism is "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the "Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident"" (p. 2). Said noted the presence of Orientalist thought in the works of European scholars, artists and academics throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Through analyzing canonical European literary works from this era, Said (1979) noted the existence of misrepresentations, over-simplifications and binaries which constructed the West as being diametrically opposed to the East. Said (1979) argued that Orientalists viewed the East or the "Orient" as being overly sensual, primitive, and violently opposed to the West. According to Said (1979), these views of the Orient perpetuated a constant ensemble of images and stereotypes that completely ignored the diversity across the Orient.

Said (1979) contended that Orientalism was a tool that was used by Western academics, scholars, and artists to assert dominance over the East. As Said (1979) stated,

> Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism [is] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (p. 3).

The ideas of control and domination discussed by Said in *Orientalism* originated from the history that European nations have had in dominating Arab and Muslim-majority nations throughout the period of imperialism in the 16th and 17th centuries. In another one of his works, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)*,* Said discussed how the practices of imperialism persisted throughout the post-colonial era. Said (1993) noted, "In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism…lingers where it has always been in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices"(p. 9). This mindset of superiority is believed by Said to have laid the foundations for Orientalist thought throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and which in turn constructed the "Orient" as inferior and subordinate to Europe.

There have been a number of critiques in response to Said's ideas, most notably from the historian Bernard Lewis, whom Said had labelled as a key Orientalist scholar. One of Lewis's contentions was that Orientalism developed independently of the European imperial project, as the French and English both studied Islam prior to the period of imperialism in the 16th and 17th centuries. As such, Lewis contended that Orientalism did not advance the cause of imperialism (Lewis, 1993). However, as Said (1979) observes in *Orientalism* "[t]o say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact." (p. 39). In other words, Said acknowledged that there were European scholars studying Islam prior to the period of imperialism, and it was precisely the attitudes developed by these earlier scholars which created a theoretical pretext for an imperial project. Another critique of Said's work was that within his analysis of selected canonized Western texts, he reproduces the same essentializing discourse which his work sought to undermine, by portraying Western scholarship as homogeneous. In other words, some charge that Said used the same broad brush when describing those whom he was criticizing by not engaging with critical and dissenting views within European scholarship (Ahmad, 1992). Aijaz Ahmad (1992) further argued that by examining instances of Orientalist thought prior to European colonialism, Said's work was unclear as to whether Orientalism was a by-product of colonialism or whether colonialism came about through Orientalist thought. Despite its critiques and shortcomings, Said's work remains a foundational text for theorizing and understanding the 'Othering' of Muslims.

As will be demonstrated in the proceeding sections, far-right movements in Europe and North America have assumed a number of the elements of radicalism, extremism, populism, nationalism, and exaltation in the process of 'Othering' of Muslims.

The growth of far-right ideologies in Europe and North America

For the sake of brevity, I have limited my discussion of far-right movements in Europe to the UK, France, and the Netherlands. That is not to say that other European nations have not also seen a growth of far-right anti-Muslim movements. Far-right movements have become increasingly popular in Germany, Finland, Norway, Greece, Switzerland, and other nations (Vieten & Poynting, 2016). Furthermore, Todd Green (2015) notes that extreme right-wing Islamophobic parties constitute the second or third largest parties in the parliaments of Norway,

and Denmark, and has the largest representation in the Swiss parliament. When examining the growth of far-right views in Europe, it is clear that Brexit is one of the byproducts of the normalization of far-right rhetoric in the UK.

UK. The UK referendum to leave the European Union (EU), commonly referred to as 'Brexit' was supported by a number of far-right groups and politicians, and garnered almost 52% support amongst the UK population. One of the most prominent images employed in the campaign to leave the EU was a poster featuring swaths of refugees, seemingly lined up at the gates of the UK boarders. With implicit reference to the refugee crisis stemming from the ongoing war in Syria and Iraq, clearly these concerns were targeted towards fears of an influx of the Muslim 'Other'. In bright red letters, the poster stated "BREAKING POINT", suggesting that these dark skinned 'Others' were poised to invade the UK, catalyzing the erosion of the white English majoritarian culture. The poster's subheadings suggested that this perceived title wave of refugees was brought on by the failings of the EU and that the only way to regain control of one's borders was through Brexit. Though these claims were fictitious and unsubstantiated, it drew heavily from the type of rhetoric commonly employed by far-right groups in the UK, particularly those of the English Defence League (EDL), promoting the notion that English culture and identity was under attack by an antithetical Muslim 'Other'.

The EDL was formed in 2009 in response to protests against returning British soldiers from Afghanistan organized by the British-based Islamist group called Al-Muhajiroun (Braouezec, 2016). The EDL is an Islamophobic street protest movement aimed at preserving UK identity and culture in the face of a perceived Islamisation of the UK and Europe (Allen, 2011). It is one of the more extreme far-right movements in the UK. Finding popular support among a number of football hooligans, the EDL has increasingly gained credibility, despite its outlandish claims that Islam is threatening British civilization. Since its inception in 2009, it has been one of the most active far-right groups and the most covered in the media in Europe from 2009-2015 (Braouezec, 2016). One of the central beliefs amongst members of the EDL is that Muslims are culturally subsuming the UK through a massive influx of immigration, and that the political elite are going through great lengths to cover this up. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of its members vastly over-estimate the Muslim population of the UK (Braouezec, 2016). EDL members allege that unless there are major political and/or legislative reforms, the ongoing Islamisation of the UK will eventually reach an impasse, where Muslims will forcefully impose, through political pressure, or violence if necessary, Islamic law

and beliefs on their 'host' society. the EDL, like many others associated with far-right movements around the world, incorporates messages of the far-right's growing obsession with anti-Muslim militancy and nostalgia over the middle ages, particularly the crusades (Elliot, 2017).

The EDL commonly employs imagery of the Knights Templar cross and crusaders in their advertisements, claiming to be defenders of the UK against radical Islamic ideologies. One such poster displays a Knight Templar crusader with his head lowered and kneeling, while resting on his sword, as if in silent contemplation or prayer before battle. The caption reads "English Defence League: Deafening (sic) our Country from Radical Islam". Next to the crusader is the image of a shield with a sword passing through. The shield contains elements of the EDL logo on it, which has the red Templar cross over a white and black background. Above the cross is written 'English Defence League' and below the cross is the Latin phrase 'in hoc signo vinces' (in this sign you will conquer). The EDL motto of 'in hoc signo vinces' evokes a historical legacy of Christian religious combat and militancy. This advertisement, while misspelling 'defending', reinforces the notion of exaltation and the 'nationalist subject' (Thobani, 2007; Hage, 2000). The nationalist subject is a fallacious conception of citizenship that presumes that members of the majoritarian culture in society are possessed of certain core values, beliefs, and traits that embody the true essence of the nation. People who conceive of themselves as a nationalist subject believe that they are entitled to determine what does and does not belong in society. Furthermore, they are entitled and empowered to expel 'Others' who do not belong. The advertisement stating that it is defending 'our' country, is implicitly referring to an imagined collective group that is exclusionary in its essence, particularly against the Muslim 'Other'. This imagined group possesses the power to determine what needs to be defended against. In other words, the EDL feels empowered to determine the values, identity, and culture, of the nation, as well as identify the elements, groups, and individuals, which contaminate it. These views are similar to those expressed by a number of far-right movement based out of France.

France. While the UK generally promotes a multiculturalism model of integration, France has a stronger assimilationist approach to integration of immigrant populations (Braouezec, 2016). This has manifested in a number of state policies, which have limited the display of religious practice and attire in the public sphere. Such policies include a ban on the *hijab* (head veil)in public schools in 2004, a ban of the *niqab* (face covering) in 2010, and an attempted ban on the *burkini*, a full-

body swim suit worn by some Muslim women, in a number of French municipalities in 2016. These legislations have been promoted under the guise of preserving the state policy of *laicité. Laicité,* or French secularism as I will be using the term, can be understood as a normative political culture in which there is a strict separation between church and state on matters of public policy. It differs from the term 'secularism', which some have described as the co-existence of multiple religious and non-religious perspectives in a given social context (Taylor, 2007). *Laicité* has traditionally been rooted in separating Catholicism from the state. In more contemporary times it has been geared towards dichotomizing Muslims as 'Other' in French society. As Selby (2011) notes, "[i]f during the first half of the twentieth century the separation of church and state was intended to displace Catholicism, in recent decades Islam has been increasingly depicted as the new challenge for French secularism" (p. 442). Within France this dates back to the post-war era when there was a large increase of Muslim immigrants arriving from North Africa as unskilled labourers in the 1940-1960s. The consistent growth of Muslim migrants over the decades brought about tensions, as state discourses framed Muslims as threats to French culture and society. This was apparent in the Stasi Commission Report published by the French government in 2003, which examined the application of secularist principles in France. The report emphasized *laicité* as a fundamental pillar of French society and essential for national unity and cohesion. However, the Stasi Commission Report positioned "Islam as overly 'political' and 'patriarchal' and describe[d] Muslim women as 'oppressed' by their religious tradition" (Selby, 2011, p. 445). Additionally, the report associated Islam with polygamy, genital mutilation, and forced marriages (Stasi Commission, 2003). This report led to the French government passing a law banning conspicuous religious symbols in public schools in 2004. The majority of cases in which the law was applied involved Muslim women wearing the head scarf (Al-Saji, 2010). Hence, Muslims have become the direct targets of French secularism in contemporary times through discourses of 'liberating' Muslim women from their oppressive religious beliefs and practices. Drawing from the work of Fanon, Alia Al-Saji (2010) argues that perceptions of Islamic symbols like the head scarf being threatening to French society dates back to the colonial era.

In his critical essay 'Algeria Unveiled', Fanon (1965) discusses the French colonizers' project of removing the Muslim head scarf from Algeria in the 1930s. According to him, the colonizers perceived the headscarf as a cultural identifier, believing that by eliminating the head scarf they would be taking steps towards destroying Algerian culture in the colony. Dismantling Algerian culture was

essential, as the colonizers viewed themselves in stark contrast to the colonized. According to Al-Saji (2010), "[t]he representational apparatus of colonialism not only constitutes the image of the 'native' but posits this image in opposition to a certain self-perception of colonial society and against an implicit normalization of gender within that society" (p. 883). It is through this dichotomizing gaze that a civilized-self emerged in contrast to a barbaric 'Other'. This perception of the 'Other' constructed the Muslim head veil as a deviation from French society and was therefore deemed unacceptable. This historic legacy of racism and limiting religious and cultural expression in the public sphere has fostered an atmosphere in France where political parties can openly target minority communities, claiming they are threatening French culture and identity. One such organization is the Front National.

The Front National has long been perceived as a far-right political party with openly anti-immigration, anti-Semitic, and anti-Muslim views. Founded in the 1970s and composed of neo-fascist and opponents of decolonization, the Front National was perceived as a fringe party at its inception. However, in the 2017 French election, the Front National, led by Marine Le Pen, the daughter of party founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, found herself in a run-off election against Emmanuel Macron, ultimately losing by a reasonable margin. What was shocking about this election was that a far-right party like the Front National was able to gain enough support to make it to a run-off election vote in France. Le Pen has openly advocated a ban on all ostentatious religious attire in the public space, has claimed that she would put a halt to all immigration in France (Reuters, 2017), has denied France's role in the Vel d'Hiv round up in which French police rounded up 13,000 Jews to send to Auschwitz (Katz, 2017), and has likened Muslims' observances of prayers in France, to the Nazi occupation (Patrikarakos, 2017). Yet, in the 2017 French election, Le Pen's Front National still managed to obtain 34% support from the French population. Far-right anti-Muslim extremist views have also become increasingly popular amongst street protest movements in France. Once such movement is the Bloc Identitaire.

The Bloc Identitair was created in 2003 and "describes itself as very attached to the defence of national and regional identities and also the common values shared by the European 'civilisation' to whom they claim to belong" (Braouezec, 2016, p. 639). As such, the Bloc, is even more exclusionary than the EDL and is composed exclusively of white individuals. Similar to the EDL, the Bloc invokes the idea of returning to a 'golden age', though not clearly defined, but presumably a time

predating the arrival of large immigrant communities in France, particularly Muslims. This 'golden age' has been succeeded by a civilization on the verge of collapse because of immigrant populations. Deflecting accusations of being a racist organization, the Bloc relies on the notion of white victimhood, claiming that they are at the forefront of protecting France's national heritage. A number of its members have blamed Muslim populations for increased crime rates in France, and through online mediums, a number of members advocate violence and murder of Muslims and other immigrant populations (Braouezec, 2016). In the Netherlands, vitriolic hate speech is not only common amongst street protest movements, but most loudly proclaimed by political figures who have dramatically risen in popularity.

Netherlands. Undeniably, one of the most outspoken racist and Islamophobic European politicians is Geert Wilders, the founder and leader of the Party for Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands. Wilders's anti-Muslim hatred was most prominent in a short film that he produced called *Fitna* (2008), which explicitly linked texts from the Quran with violence and terrorism. Wilders was eventually charged with hate speech under Dutch law in 2009 for the film, however he was acquitted. The media frenzy surrounding the trial served to bolster his reputation as a staunch defender of European values and culture in face of the Islamisation title wave confronting Europe. In the 2017 Dutch election, almost half of his one page election manifesto was committed to the de-Islamisation of the Netherlands. A part of his political platform included closing all mosques and Islamic religious schools, drastically changing immigration policies, and banning the Quran (Mudde, 2017). Furthermore, Wilders would have imposed a "head rag" tax, for Muslim women who wear the *hijab*, and was willing to pay settled Muslims to leave the Netherlands, if he had won the election (Marsh, 2017). Though Wilders lost the 2017 Dutch election, one cannot deny the impact that he has had on the Dutch political landscape. Seen as a fringe minority party in 2006, Wilders's PVV party became the third largest party in parliament in the 2010 Dutch election. Furthermore, Wilders's fiery populist rhetoric has pushed the country's political discourse further to the right. This has helped spawn the popularity of other far-right and centre-right political parties, such as the Forum for Democracy (PvD) who advocate similar views as Wilders, but have taken a more sanitized approach to their anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes and rhetoric (Marsh, 2017). Presumably, figures like Wilders have also fueled the growth of far-right populist groups, like Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (PEGIDA), a German based racist anti-Muslim group, which was inaugurated in the Netherlands

in 2015. Far-right views and politics have also grown substantially in Canada and the US.

Canada. Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens (2016) have done an extensive study on the growth of far-right extremists groups across Canada. In this study they found that there are no less than 100 far-right extremist groups in Canada. These groups vary in size, ranging from three members to a few dozen. However, there are some groups, which have an exceptionally large following. One group, based out of Quebec called "La Meute" (the Wolf Pack) has over 40,000 followers on Facebook (Montpetit, 2016). Like far-right groups in Europe, La Meute specifically has grievances with Muslims and the Islamic faith, and perceive it as a threat to Quebecois culture and identity (Montpetit, 2016). Ultimately, members of this organization fear Islamisation and believe that Muslims living in Canada want to impose *sharia*. Therefore, the group openly advocates for the banning of *halal* food and are critical of Canadian multiculturalism policies. The growth of far-right extremist groups in Canada have been particularly concerning, as the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) has noted that the threat of far-right and white supremacist ideologies outweighs radical Muslim religious ideologies with regards to national security (Boutilier, 2015).

Far-right extremist groups in Canada are overwhelmingly white supremacist in nature. These groups tend to be transitory and unorganized, but have been on the rise over the past two decades (Perry & Scrivens, 2016). They target a number of minority groups particularly Muslims, Jews, LGBTQ, and First Nations communities. Much of the anti-Muslim racism espoused by far-right groups in Canada have become increasingly present through online platforms. A study commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Company suggests that the frequency of language that is Islamophobic, sexist, racist, or xenophobic has increased by 600% from 2015 to 2016. The same study found that language expressing far-right and white supremacist views increased by 300%, while anti-Muslim language online increased by 200% in Canada during this period (CBC News, 2017). The proliferation of far-right views and ideas through online mediums, may be helpful in understanding the growth of far-right and anti-Muslim views in Canadian politics.

In 2011, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated in an interview with CBC News that the greatest threat to Canada's national security is "Islamicism". It is unclear exactly what this term means, as it is not an actual word, however, the implied sentiment was that violence inspired by Muslim extremists occupied the

primary focus of the national security apparatus. More recently, prominent Conservative politician, Kelly Leitch, was running for the Conservative Party leadership in 2017. A part of her platform, if she won the leadership of the party was to impose a screening process for immigrants coming to Canada to see if they possess "anti-Canadian values" (Kingston, 2017). What "anti-Canadian values" Leitch was referring to were never clearly defined, nor, and more troubling, was it clearly defined who was in a position to define what "anti-Canadian values" were. However, Leitch has had a history of trying to cleanse Canada from 'Other' cultures, when she, along with Citizenship and Immigration Minister, Chris Alexander, unveiled Bill S-7, the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act. Echoing notions of exaltation (Thobani, 2007), this Bill prevented immigrants entering Canada from certain "barbaric" cultural practices. No specific culture was defined in this legislation, however, cultural practices stereotypically associated with Muslims such as polygamy, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, and honour-based violence were all listed (Shephard, 2014). The Bill was clearly a red herring, as it was prohibiting practices that were already illegal, while implicitly giving the impression of outlawing certain imagined cultures that were trying to infiltrate Canadian society. The growth of far-right views in public and political discourse have also emerged in the US through street protest movements in numerous states across the nation.

US. The current wave of far-right extremism in the US, manifesting in white supremacist protest movements across the nation, has been attributed to a growing sense of anger and misplaced fears of marginalization amongst young white American men. Michael Kimmel (2015), an American sociologist has examined the notions of white masculinity in the US and from his exhaustive study he has found that a growing number of young white men are feeling discontent with the "system" and are raging against it. Kimmel believes that the reason for this anger is because the age of unquestioned white male privilege is coming to an end. Kimmel is not arguing that white privilege ceases to exist. On the contrary, it is still embedded in the fabric of US society. However, the idea of *unquestioned* white male privilege is at the end of an era. In other words the US is *more* just with regards to labour laws, civil rights laws, and other forms of legislation, than in previous generations. The US is not a post-race society, however, there is arguably more recourse to justice for 'out'-groups than in previous generations. As such, the 'in'-groups, or members of the majoritarian culture may be feeling that the privileged world around them is slowly shrinking and are outraged about it. As Kimmel observes, when one has experienced privilege their entire life, moving towards a more egalitarian society

feels like oppression. These feelings of discontent and disillusionment have fueled the growth of the "new" far-right in the US, which is increasingly becoming apparent in US political discourse.

A prominent far-right ideologue, who recently came to prominence in US politics was Steve Bannon. Bannon was the former White House Chief Strategist to the President of the US, and currently occupies the position of executive chairman of Breitbart News, a far-right American news, opinion, and commentary website. Like many far-right zealots, Bannon has a strong religious identity, and through Breitbart News pedals wild conspiracy theories about the Islamisation of America, and the dire threat posed by globalists and liberals (Boyer, 2017). Bannon is accredited with being the architect of the nationalist-populist program promoted by the Trump campaign during the 2016 US Presidential election. In his capacity as Chief Strategist to the US President, Bannon was the driving force behind a controversial executive order, which under the pretext of national security, barred individuals from seven Muslim majority nations from entering the US (Shane, 2017). This travel ban, was infamously dubbed the 'Muslim ban' because of how it was promoted throughout the 2016 US Presidential campaign. Prior to becoming Chief Strategist, Bannon openly espoused Islamophobic views, advocating the notion that America was involved in an apocalyptic war with radical Islam (Shane, 2017). Though Bannon eventually resigned from his position as Chief Strategist, he continues to impact US politics with his far-right agenda through his position at Breitbart News, as he stated in one interview, "at the White House I had influence, at Breitbart I (have) power" (The Economist, 2017). Bannon is able to exercise this "power", as Breitbart represents the mouthpiece for the far-right political base, which greatly influenced the 2016 US Presidential election. Furthermore, Bannon's departure as Chief Strategist has reinvigorated his drive to affect political change, as he stated, "Now I'm free. I've got my hands back on my weapons…I built a f***ing machine at Breitbart. And now I'm about to go back, knowing what I know, and we're about to rev that machine up. And rev it up we will do" (Boyer, 2017). Not surprisingly, Bannon openly promotes claims that Christianity is in a civilizational war with Islam.

In a 2014 conference address, convened at the Vatican, Bannon described how the Judeo-Christian West was at the beginning phases of a war with Islamic fascism. He contended that Islam was "threatening to overrun a prostrate West weakened by the erosion of traditional Christian values" (Horowitz, 2017). Furthermore, Bannon argued that ISIS is the greatest threat facing the West, and

drew comparisons of how the West needs to put a stop to Islamic expansionism, as it had done traditionally throughout European history. In one such passage Bannon stated:

> I believe you should take a very, very, very aggressive stance against radical Islam…If you look back at the long history of the Judeo-Christian West struggle against Islam, I believe that our forefathers kept their stance, and I think they did the right thing. I think they kept it out of the world, whether it was at Vienna, or Tours, or other places. … It bequeathed to us the great institution that is the church of the West (cited in Golshan, 2017)

The views echoed by Bannon are similar to those of Evangelical lobbyists that had formed a major political support base throughout the presidency of George W. Bush (Salaita, 2006). These Evangelical lobby groups supported an aggressive Middle-Eastern foreign policy in favour of the state of Israel because of their belief that Jewish control over Jerusalem and the holy land was necessary for the second coming of Jesus Christ along with the kingdom of heaven and end of days (Salaita, 2006).

Conclusion

This article examined how far-right protest movements and political figures across Europe and North America are increasingly voicing Islamisation as a primary issue of concern, thus appealing to populist sentiment and normalizing anti-Muslim bigotry in public discourse. Not long ago, a number of these political parties, such as the Front National and the PVV were considered fringe political parties. However, they are now increasingly being viewed as legitimate parties contributing to and impacting the political landscape in their nations, despite their draconian views, which openly promote platforms that target and police Muslims in their societies. These far-right political zealots feed off of identity issues to vilify Muslims, which in turn legitimizes outlandish claims of far-right protest movements like the EDL and Bloc Identitaire, whose members have advocated for violent solutions to stem the Islamisation tidal wave (Braouezek, 2016). The steady growth, incitement, and normalization of anti-Muslim racism has practical consequences for Muslim minority communities in Western nations including targeted legislation, hate crimes, and social marginalization (Kundnani, 2014; Kumar, 2012; Sheehi, 2011).

This work provides valuable insights in the field of critical Muslim studies as it demonstrates how Islamophobia and the 'Othering' of Muslims manifests through racial and political posturing in variant contexts. In addition, this study illustrates the complexity of prejudices that people might harbour, not conveniently defined in a single form but rather existing in a web of sentiments encapsulating ideas about race, racism, ethnicity, nationalism, religion, and culture. This study brings to light a range of issues Said (1979) and others have explored as the lens of Orientalism through which people employ such sentiments and prejudices in western societies. A further area of inquiry to build on this work could examine various other European contexts to examine how far-right political figures and protest movements have incorporated Islamophobic platforms and discourses. Additionally, studies could examine Muslim reactions and sentiments towards the growth of far-right anti-Muslim politics and social movements, as well as possible approaches for challenging these manifestations of Islamophobia.

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The Reach and Reason of Social Sciences; Impossibility of A Globalized Qualitative Method

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Abstract

What is the subject matter of a globalized social science. Will it be ready to make social problems globally attended? These questions need to be answered if purpose is true to classical aims. The quality is not necessary to differentiate, though to some extent it does so. The ethnographic focus on integration is an inherent grip over the subject matter which is without a political restructuring of favoring those who are for power of social science. But how the migration of knowledge serves as a vehicle for conveying senses, recognition, understanding, confidence, or humiliation? how the purposes and attitudes of others may be understood in a globally shared method? Qualitative research characteristically encompasses the organized use of the senses and replications on their shifting role on the constituents collected and evaluated. Nevertheless, it is somewhat clear that the sense of vision or observation is regarded as the principal sense in a qualitative research.

The vast significance of the qualitative methods in social sciences is amenable to sociological investigation. But the question is how such investigations can be accomplished if it's in a global range? Analyzing social phenomena as distinct form of the standard descriptive inclusion of qualitative research in sociological researches can be quite deceptive as social

phenomena can't serve as a globally common method from different social context.

Social phenomena can be investigated through a variety of qualitative methods. The aim of this paper is to engage the reader in an analytical reasoning of the limitations of these methods when it comes to the methodological matters of globalization of social sciences. There are empowering and imposing aspects to these methods, and we mirror their fluctuating strengths and weaknesses.

Every qualitative method we contemplate proposes an analytical posture, a comprehensible and reliable analytical reasoning that is defined within an academic framework of different forms of life.

Keywords: Globalization. Qualitative methods. Language games. Perception. Subjectivity.

Introduction

Globalization is reshaping how we have traditionally gone about studying the social world and human culture and a field of globalization studies is now emerging across the disciplines (Appelbaum and Robinson, 2005). why is it called globalization? The 'global' portion of 'globalization' divergences with 'local', as in 'local government'. It's mostly about the division of power and is a swing from local to global control.

Now we are facing the existence of this 'global research market', in which everyone contests with everyone else in order to get either money or publicity. It has been drawing attention to the way in which Big Research Business misrepresents our perception of the reality.

What is the subject matter of a globalized social science. Will it be ready to make social problems globally attended? These questions need to be answered if purpose is true to classical aims. The quality is not necessary to differentiate, though to some extent it does so. The ethnographic focus on integration is an inherent grip over the subject matter which is without a political restructuring of favoring those who are for power of social science.

Another question that comes to mind whether it is because of the technology particularly internet based technologies that some of the 'central' ideas would spill over to remote corners of Africa and Asia to be the fate of social problems of these regions and then they would be continued as global? The onslaught is tough but not the only option before the social sciences to declare that either they shall be accepted as globalized or research the qualitative sciences.

Globalization has engrossed the heed of the social sciences since the early 1980s. Given the newness of the theme, there are multitude of arguments on what "globalization" means, on the theoretical and methodological processes, and on the identifying and solutions of problems. How people perceive the world around them, is a crucial social question along with questions of how people bond, adjust, create, and construct social regions. Globalization has influenced knowledge outlines. Current modifications in knowledge have developed partly out of progresses within science and philosophy. Globalization altered notions of the nature of knowledge.

Globalization has been referred to as the "widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual" (Held & McGrew, 1999: 2). Throughout human history interactions among diverse cultures and civilizations have generated positive results as well as negative consequences. Social sciences are one of those organizations in modern societies that claim to use 'social scientific methods' to connect people all over the world in anticipation of a totally positive outcome. But turns out that, aggressive agenda of globalization which is praying for social sciences is controlling everything in order to serve the owner of corporations. The formation is not a shop floor of exigencies into living in the deep and behavior on the surface as if everything is in order except of course most condemnable and punishable violence, discriminations, and critical mobilities.

The Reach and Reason

The reach and reason of social sciences can be discussed from various points of view. However we are going to use two concepts from sociological theories to analyze it; Karl Marx's concept of commodity, and Foucault's concept of bio-power.

Global sciences are like commodities in the present era of neoliberal. But it is hard to commodity quality. When something turns into commodity, there must be an economic action which benefits corporate interests, because money is the most

powerful object in the world. Money is really powerful, it makes people, societies, and countries do all sort of things. The pursuit of money has an end in itself and occupies many people's lives. Marx says "a commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labor appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labor; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor (Marx, 1867, Vol. I - Chapter One). We are atomized individuals wondering through a world of objects that we consume. When we buy a commodity, we are just having an experience between ourselves and the commodity. We are blind to the social relations behind these interactions. The illusion that value comes from commodity itself not from social relations behind it. The society is full of such illusions. But it's not that the entire world is an illusion, reality exists somewhere far below the surface. The illusion is real, commodities really do have value, and money really does have social power but the social relations between people take material forms and then act back upon and shape these social relations. A key question here is what is the interest of Social Sciences? Is it globalization of social sciences for the faculty and facts or facilitate the corporate interest or trans-nationalization of facts of quality? This is the illusion that social sciences are selling. But what is the reality behind this illusion?

The idea of social planning and social technology is long dominant in sociological writing (Leibetseder, 2011). Charles Richmond Henderson refers to applied or practical sociology as social technology in the beginning of the 20th century, asking for specific social reforms and experiments for rational reforms (Henderson, 1901, 1912). C.J Bushnell develops social planning, a constitutional form of social administration and planning, to apply social technology to solve social disorder (Bushnell 1936). Other contemporary authors make use of similar ideas. Olaf Helmer reestablishes such ideas and proposes the introduction of simulation models and expert knowledge in order to make the society governable. (Helmer, 1966, 3). Foucault defines governmentality in Security, Territory, Population as allowing for a complex form of "power which has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument" (Foucault,1991: 107–8). Social sciences claim to contribute the purpose of monitoring society for a better world. An attempt by social sciences globalization to achieve 'normation' at global level by power. Foucault's term of 'governmentality' as bio-power and globalizing is nothing but turning social sciences into technologies, and to achieve power at global level.

These are not technologies but sciences now being attempted to be rewritten as technologies.

In his book, *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault calls this combination of discipline and bio-politics together "bio-power," though he in another place appears to use "bio-power" and "bio-politics" as synonyms. Biopolitics is a technology of power that grew up on the basis of disciplinary power (Kelly, 2009). Where discipline is about the control of individual bodies, biopolitics is about the control of entire populations. In the modern era, the perception grew among governments that interferences in the life of the people would produce advantageous consequences for the state, averting depopulation, assuring a steady and rising tax base, and providing a consistent source of human bodies for the military. Hence, they took a dynamic curiosity in the lives of the people. Disciplinary mechanisms permitted the state to do this through institutions. Social sciences institutes are the kinds of institutions that allowed the state to monitor the population.

Research method in social sciences

systematic methods of data collection require descriptive approach and begin with introspection in the mind of the studied subject. this in no way is trivial as Husserl clarifies.
Cognitive science studies memory, perception and so many other things related to mind but largely consciousness is ignored. This is not kind of self-awareness that is to be explored. This requires skill training of researcher to study individual manifest of collective consciousness. Time, space, body, cause and effect and how people organize their life are complex conditions of study. Even market control and vulnerability of consumers are phenomena which at one hand involve sensory ideas and on the other cultural qualities. The dynamism of qualitative method is only because of its coping with the changing consciousness and its intentionality.

Social sciences are strengthened or weakened by globalization venture is a moot question, but transcultural world that is ours cannot be explored if the method is incapacitated therefore cultural consciousness of the immediate world is to be explored and that becomes possible not by a global perspective but by the ecology on which a people have lived for centuries. The empirical subject is not without subjectivity. How a technically objective tool can fathom the consciousness that makes one another different from each other but similar in the sense of transcendence as evident what is seen as "self-acquired knowledge trending toward

universality" (Husserl, 1960). What globalization is supposed to do is conditioning of consciousness- a deconditioning exercise is needed. Market is repressive and conditions social reality. To explore, qualitative method becomes the better option specially to search and know that is real and in fraught with human values and consciousness.

Language discourse, and qualitative research

The massive symbolic supremacy of language establishes the basis of communication in an understandable reasoning for a qualitative research. The illustration of culture, therefore, takes place mainly through the medium of language. This paper is going to question the method of conducting qualitative description and analysis, and the resulting neglect of interpretation differences that accompanies it. It includes the concepts of meaning, of comprehension, of judgement, states of consciousness, and other things. Using language in a discipline of words can show the ways in which language has been permitted to do the work of eyes.

Theory of language games is essentially a postmodern philosophy view of language. The theory of Language Game is the most fundamental discussion of Ludwig Wittgenstein in his latest philosophy thoughts. He developed this theory in contrast with his 'picture theory of language' in which he suggested that propositions are pictures and language is used to make these pictures. According to picture theory, language has only one function and that is illustration of reality. Picture theory of language suggests that statements are significant if they can be described or visualized in the real world (Wittgenstein, 2009). In fact, recent theory essentially represents a modern view of language. In contrast, the theory of Language Game is a multidimensional phenomenon. In fact, language is a statue of different linguistic games and linguistic functions. Each of these linguistic games are compatible with a form of life. Therefore, understanding of a language game requires sharing that form of life in which that language game has a part in, and occurs in the context of the target language.

Wittgenstein examined the phenomenon of language as a philosopher, not as a linguist. Essentially none of Wittgenstein's work is linguistic in nature. In other words, Wittgenstein's research about language, was directed towards the second-rate cognition of the language. Essentially, Wittgenstein's questions about language, are existential questions, not technical questions. The dominant discourse of all the

time is the discourse of "language", Therefore Wittgenstein did most of his work through the perspective of language discourse. Consequently, the important point on which we must reflect on, however, is that Wittgenstein does not seek intact truth about the structure and function of language; but he is looking for truth through the language researches. That is, Wittgenstein's linguistic research, is the collection of certain philosophical techniques in order to find the truth.

It can be claimed that under globalization languages are developing and spreading less and less as adhesive uniform linguistic structure. Given the Wittgenstein's language game theory, to understand the game of a certain language, one ought to live and share life with people in the context of the target language. Maybe it's possible when the research is going on in a local area, but how one is going to cover that when it's on a global range?

It is not utterly wrong to guess that the international division of labor is reinforced by international division of languages. if globalization of research method is going on, as it is, every few years some communities lose their spoken languages, and along with cultural artifacts. if quantification finally replaces qualitative, no medium of research, no computational method, no software would reach to heart of culture of people who are remotely removed from global circuit of market and its use. even losing of local words to English and couple of other 'global' languages unless noted to be important for cultural communication, unless made significant by qualitatively oriented social scientists will be rapidly helping loss of the communication yielding finally to an alien meaning to indigenous life and culture.

Subjectivity, and qualitative data

Other than language, qualitative research method in its nature has some difficulty to reach to an accurate and unbiased representation of the world. Subjectivity is one of qualitative method's major defects. The subjective nature of the information could lead to a misconceive and spectator bias, especially when the researcher doesn't have a very positive attitude towards the people whom he is studying (which happens a lot when they are studying people from certain countries). Subjectivity is also a problem when analyzing data, because in qualitative research, data must be interpreted. Researchers could innocently interpret the data in a way that proposes what they wish to. This can't be done as simply with quantitative, mathematical data.

As a result of qualitative method's subjective nature, its level of detail and its comparatively small sample size, it's difficult to generalize qualitative discoveries to the population at large. Quantitative research can simply generalize data, because it can convert its finding into percentages and other mathematical terminologies that can be analogized. Regrettably, the detailed answers that qualitative research renders make them hard to generalize to the population at large. The amount of detail in respectively study also indicates that less people are studied, hence making the participants a less precise illustration of the entire population.

Epistemological subjectivity and using self-reflexivity as a significant instrument to access and to develop social scientific knowledge is quite a challenge for researchers. Every research is fundamentally controlled by the subjectivity of the researcher. Hence, they might limit themselves by illustrating subjectivity in self-justifying ways as an epistemological shortage, escorted by methodological labors, to minimize or eradicate probable biases. instead the researcher must face the epistemological and methodological encounters in a practical way. We aught to be in pursuit of a way through which social scientific outcomes would be independent from the one who conducts the research. Therefore, objectivity is what distinguishes between valid scientific facts and other results of human activities and cognition. Plenty of evidences support the debate that personal, social, and local factors affect the research procedure and its outcomes. Thus, data collection and interpretation should be done by procedures that assist removing subjective and local influences. A research in a global range requires apprehending a world beyond the individual (researcher) and his cultural values, symbols, and terms of interrelationship. He has to judge his observation and findings according to what meanings he contributes to that culture. If his judgement of an incident imparts a cultural meaning that is different from the given cultural meaning of the same incident in the research field, it would be very difficult for him to overcome the battle between subjectivity and objectivity in his mind.

foundations of qualitative method in the evolution of quantitative is not unsupported but engulfed by those who control technology because of lots of money and the game of sponsorship for 'convenient' questions as research problems through conveniently forgetting the inconvenient questions as technocracy of research has been mostly directed towards profit. If internet based researches could be decontrolled, quantitative would come closer to quality. This would be possible when market is not under command of a few.

Conclusion

Globalization is basically demanding of nations to abandon their different aspects of sovereignty to adapt to Western ways. While culture is dynamic and each nation is unique in its political, cultural, and geographical makeup, globalization is a set-in-stone package that is hard to adopt.

Overarching concerns of now winning now failing globalization are to some extent find solace in usurping power of social sciences but had they been fully successful, the concern of qualitative methods would never have been interested in the ways that had led to approach like grounded theory or being human, or occupy movement. There is an issue between true global village and multinational penetrations which is a concern on agenda of globalization and on how to win by penetrating local market by their goods. Recession is failure, knowledge is victory if social sciences and are incorporated for helping out of recession, dot.com busts, like Thatcherism, Reaganomics were policies built on Friedman economics which is the background of neoliberalism. Also, the knowledge and information uprising accompanying with globalization has twisted an increasingly negative environment that signifies a challenge for comparative studies.

Types of globalization is different in different types of societies. It is well known that Confucianist, Hindu, Islamic, and African cultural traditions are based on the opposite values of particularism, collectivism, and social hierarchy (Samovar & Porter, 2003). These civilizational, religious, and intellectual traditions have shaped Western civilization. Isn't it, then, legitimate to raise the question of whether these five so-called "world cultural principles" are understood in the same way by all societies of the world, many of which are based on different civilizational traditions (Rossi, 2007: 43). But how the migration of knowledge serves as a vehicle for conveying senses, recognition, understanding, confidence, or humiliation? how the purposes and attitudes of others may be understood in a globally shared method? Qualitative research characteristically encompasses the organized use of the senses and replications on their shifting role on the constituents collected and evaluated. Nevertheless, it is somewhat clear that the sense of vision or observation is regarded as the principal sense in a qualitative research.

Where discipline is about the control of individual bodies, biopolitics is about the control of entire populations. In the modern era, the perception grew among governments that interferences in the life of the people would produce advantageous consequences for the state, averting depopulation, assuring a steady and rising tax

base, and providing a consistent source of human bodies for the military. Hence, they took a dynamic curiosity in the lives of the people. Disciplinary mechanisms permitted the state to do this through institutions. Social sciences institutes are the kinds of institutions that allowed the state to monitor the population.

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The Revival and Development of Islamic Sciences

Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

For the last few decades the voices of revival of Islamic sciences have been heard almost everywhere in the world. Several local and international conferences were held on Islamic sciences, and a good number of books, papers, and journals have been published dealing with the various dynamics of this topic. In spite of all these efforts, the movement of the revival and development of Islamic sciences lacks clarity in thoughts and lingers having several misunderstandings. As a result, some people consider it as the revival of some sort of religiously-oriented sciences while some others think of it to solely be the business of a select few from the Muslim community. In addition, some scholars mix it up with fundamentalist trends whereas other groups see it as a backward look in Islamic scholarship. Some people, though few in number, thought about it as an intellectually unsound activity. Hence,

the contention of this paper is to present the movement of the revival and development of Islamic sciences in its proper perspective. The main goal of this paper is to address these types of stereotypes and set the movement of revival and development of Islamic sciences in its universal and people-oriented perspective.

The basic premises of this paper are that the modern Western sciences have been disastrous in some respects because of their philosophical foundation which is developed based on the incorrect views of life, society and the world. This paper further argues that the movement of the Islamic sciences is urgently needed as it offers the kind of 'sciences' that are based on the truth and the reality of life, society and the world. Hence, they are capable to elevate humanity from the acute problems prevalent in our modern world. Another contention of this paper is that the basic spirit, nature, aims, characteristics and methodology of Islamic sciences are based on the valid foundations of true, authentic and universal knowledge of the reality of life, society and the world. Hence, the revival and development of Islamic sciences are valid and desirable. They are neither religious nor exclusivist.

For this purpose, an investigation into the true meaning of revival of Islamic sciences, their aim, scope and methodology, will be conducted. It will offer an examination of the challenges and prospects.

Keywords: Revival, Science, Knowledge, Development, Metaphysics.

Introduction

Generally people claim they know many things. They claim they possess knowledge which might be true. However, a critical and analytical analysis tells us something differently: how much do they really know. Most of the time, they do not know correctly and truly. They do not have correct and true knowledge. For example, they come across with titles such as *Research Methods in Social Relations*; *Understanding Research Methods*; *Fundamentals of Critical Thinking*; *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to Analytical Reading and Reasoning*; *An Introduction to Science*; *Philosophy of Science*; *Fundamentals of Economics* etc. They take them as granted. Hardly, they become critical about the titles, contents and overall discussion of books. They think the above mention books are of the concern of everyone as, it is claimed, they dealt subjects in an objective and universal manner. However, most of those books, concepts, terminologies, models, theories, sciences, disciplines and branches of knowledge are always developed based on some perspectives. Perspectives that might be right might be wrong. One thing is sure. None of them are neutral and therefore universal. All are deeply

rooted within some sort of   worldviews. Worldviews true or untrue are never questioned.

Presentation from a true and correct perspective is an intellectual challenge. It demands a fresh and critical look into the basic approaches to the theory of 'scholarship'. How, scholars treat misunderstandings that constitute the real intellectual challenge. What kind of framework of analysis and explanation do scholars use? Under what circumstances did the need for Islamic sciences arise? To what extent are scholars able to comment on the existing paradigm of sciences? In what way are scholars able to respond to the so-called development of modern Western sciences? Have the modern Western sciences guaranteed safety, security, prosperity and peaceful living? Or have they created innumerable problems for life and society? All these questions require a fresh thinking and evaluation.

To make sure that our knowledge of things is true and authentic we need to examine them critically. Our concepts of critical, analytical and scientific thinking and their criteria themselves might be under the purview of some perspective. Hence, they may be subject to examination (Ali, 2016:132-144; Ali, 201:31-48).[1] We, therefore, contend for the sake of clarity and better understanding our knowledge must be analysed critically. The same is applicable to Islamic sciences. For example, the knowledge of people of Islamic sciences may not be fully correct, true, authentic and realistic. We stress, in most of the cases, the knowledge of people of Islamic sciences seems to be neither true nor realistic (Nasr, 2001:7).[2]

The sciences and disciplines that had been developed in modern period, at a time when the Islamic sciences had become stagnant and lost their credibility, were accepted as neutral and universal[3] and they kept on moving forward in their journey of intellectual quest. Today, they dominate the scholarship of the world and lead them. Their basic premises are hardly questioned. In the same way, the reasons of the stagnation of Islamic sciences were too not scrutinized on the basis of suitable criteria of analysis. Scholars generally apply the modern Western criteria of analysis and think that they have fulfilled the need of critical analysis.

It is also claimed that the modern science, that is natural sciences, benefited from the Islamic sciences and it was further developed by modern Western experts of science. The new techniques, tools and skills of scientific investigation were introduced. A good number of unclear aspects of science and scientific method were explained in more details. For example, it is claimed, the system of observation with its minor details was further developed. For this purpose, technological instruments

were used. In this way the refinement and development of modern science took place. It seems to us that in this process of the refinement and development a few philosophical, metaphysical, epistemological and methodological conclusions were also drawn that were seen as 'right' and 'correct'. However, a fresh analysis based on empirical, historical and rational evidences suggests that these philosophical and metaphysical conclusions about life and reality deserve a critical review as they were mainly based on conjecture instead of true, authentic and universal knowledge.

The modern West was bound to resolve to conjecture because they were trying to use reason and sense perception to answer metaphysical questions which by their very nature are not the realm of reason and sense perception. They perceived conjecture and doubt, to be true, right, and beneficial. When one sees that modern philosophy and science were unable to answer the metaphysical questions of life and reality correctly as based on knowledge, one may move elsewhere to seek these answers.

Need for New Data

An empirical, historical and rational analysis of the data of the Quran shows that its claims on life and reality are based on knowledge - true, authentic and universal. In fact, one sees the Quran stresses an empirical and rational approach to understand the truth and reality of life and the world (Ali, 2014:18-63). The Quran does not, in fact, accept any doctrinal or mythological approach as being authentic. However, the modern understanding of Islamic sciences committed a mistake and adopted an exclusivist approach due to the influence of Orientalist terminology which limited the use and practice of Islamic sciences to religious sciences. We say modern here because we are referring to the development of Islamic sciences of the past century, and not the reality of pioneering Islamic sciences of second century of *Hijrah*. Religions are generally perceived in the modern world as which do not satisfy rationally and empirically the soundness of their perspectives. Islam is also unjustly included in that category of world religions. Hence, this method becomes problematic. Instead, an 'Islamic' view on sciences or the development of Islamic sciences should be used which is based on rational, historical and empirical foundation as the Quran claimed. This Quranic approach is universal which seeks to answer all questions on life and reality based on knowledge. Thus, we argue that all branches of Islamic sciences need to be developed based on sound foundation of rational, historical and empirical evidences along with knowledge. This is the main challenge faced today by Islamic sciences, i.e., going back to the Quranic approach

of being and also becoming proactive in offering solutions and the way forward for all of humanity instead of confining the term science to religious affairs only.

Instead of pointing out these problems, for a long time most people of the world join the modern West. The bearers of Islamic sciences were no exception in this following. In their own area of Islamic sciences they also committed some conceptual, methodological and epistemological errors. They accepted the reduction of Islamic sciences to the level of religious sciences or at least their relation to religion. As a result of this, the world's scholarship as a whole did not realize what were the most striking and important characteristics of Islamic sciences that made them actual 'science' in the real sense of the term 'science'. The Islamic sciences are now shrouded with several misconceptions. These misconceptions need to be clarified and corrected.

The Need for the Revival of the Islamic Sciences

One of the aims of this paper is to explain the meaning of revival and a few characteristics of Islamic sciences and the need for their further development. It will also discuss the nature of challenges that are posed to the Islamic sciences. The challenge of the review and removal of the shortcomings of both modern science and Islamic sciences will be addressed. Finally, it will demonstrate that the Islamic sciences are capable to tackle the current conditions of life and society and lead people to the Path of Development – *Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*. For this reason, we advocate, they have to come forward and participate in civilizational discourse to help people to solve the problems of life and society.

Before we proceed to elaborate the meaning of the revival of Islamic sciences and the challenges, which they are facing, as a reminder we wish to restate that all branches of knowledge and sciences deal basically with life, society and the world, and the emerging problems related to them. Hence, the goal of the development of knowledge and sciences is to ensure the development of life and society. We further contend that for this purpose if we are to develop any kind of science, especially, the Islamic sciences, the correct knowledge about the truth and reality of life, society and the world is a prerequisite. This as such would constitute the metaphysical foundation of Islamic sciences. Contemporary literature on modern science shows that our knowledge in this regard is erroneous. In reality, it has ignored this fundamental question, as have other branches of knowledge.

The quest for the revival of Islamic sciences has to be seen as a humble step towards the clarification, re-examination, improvement and further development of sciences not only as the body of accumulative knowledge but also as an inclusive body of knowledge that deal with all aspects of life, society and the world, both physical and metaphysical, and give due consideration to them throughout the process of scientific inquiry. Islamic sciences, thus, have to be engaged in the milieu of the realization of the problems of modern age, science and technology. We contend, it is the jurisdiction of Islamic sciences. Hence, the proponents of the Islamic sciences have to rethink and reconceptualise the notion of 'science' as such.[4] The advocates of Islamic sciences need to highlight those aspects of Islamic sciences[5] which help people to achieve development and progress such as their emphasis on a comprehensive data and its analysis. We have also realized that the Islamic sciences cannot remain any more passive. They have to come forward to contribute something remarkable which can be useful to address the shortcomings of the intellectual efforts done by scholars, thinkers and philosophers on the issue of science and its implications.

The Meaning of Revival and Development of Islamic Sciences

The revival of Islamic sciences, for us, entails the revival of the spirit, nature, aims, characteristics and methodology of Islamic sciences based on which they not only provided a superb model of science and scientific thinking in the past but also created a remarkable history in the history of scholarship. The Islamic sciences, in terms of their spirit and objectives, were inspired and motivated by the knowledge of the truth and reality of life, society and the world. This knowledge as such was drawn from true, authentic and universal knowledge which is traditionally and generally understood as revealed knowledge. This body of knowledge had engendered a sense of mission and vision of life and society among people who developed them. This knowledge enabled them to become the pioneers of Islamic sciences who demonstrated critical and creative thinking as well. When the followers of true, authentic and universal knowledge lost, during modern period, the sense of mission and vision they also lost at the same time their basic qualities of being critical and creative and became stagnant. Consequently, this knowledge was taken as religious and communal knowledge. To demonstrate the dynamism and also the reliability of the Islamic sciences there is a need to make a reinvestigation into the metaphysical foundation of the modern science is necessary.

The Metaphysical Foundation of Modern Sciences

However, the existing literature on modern science shows it has ignored the question of a strong, truthful and realistic metaphysical foundation of it. Whatever, philosophical thought exists today especially in terms of metaphysics of modern science was always developed based upon reason, observation and experience.[6] Philosophers sought answers for metaphysical issues based upon reason and sense perception, not realizing that our faculties can only supply answers based upon data. If data is incomplete, it will lead to incomplete results. Thus, we need to look beyond the current paradigm of metaphysics of science[7] which requires a comprehensive and more relevant data. For looking beyond current paradigm and to reach to authentic and truthful conclusion, we need new data, a genuine and comprehensive data. History is characterised by two trends: 1. Data comes from true, authentic, and universal knowledge and also from 2. Conjecture and speculation. In our view, all thought not guided by true, authentic, and universal knowledge is uncertain and therefore unauthentic. In fact, this is one of the fundamental obstacles to developing genuine science.

We have reason and evidence to say this as we see most of scientists did not have true, authentic and universal knowledge as their starting point. In the absence of it for knowing the truth of life - they all depended on reason and sense perception without *knowing* that if they do not work based on appropriate data, they [reason and senses] in final quest on metaphysical issues end up with conjecture, speculation, assumptions, guess work, imaginations and also influenced by fancies, desires, doubt, dogmas, superstitions, doctrines and myths. Relying on unauthentic and unrealistic foundation of life, society and the world philosophers were not in a position to have a clear, true, correct, realistic, authentic, comprehensive and universal understanding of things. They eventually lost true perception of life, society and the world but kept on moving forward in their journey of intellectual quest.

To know anything or about any aspect of it we need to work based on reason and sense perception as well as data – a comprehensive data which come from true, authentic and universal knowledge. Our faculties are bound to exert based on that data. Thus, we need an exhaustive data.

Data can be collected from various sources. Based on data and its analysis one may come to know the truth and reality of life, society and the world. When we collected data from the Quran along with other sources we realized that the Quran

speaks of the existence of true, authentic and universal knowledge. It also claims that if faculties work under the light of data which come from true, authentic and universal knowledge they come to know the truth and reality of life, society and the world otherwise they fail. This claim is made based on a powerful ethical discourse supported by historical and empirical evidences.

As a matter of fact the central theme of the Quran speaks of the reality of life, society and the world (Al- Najam, 53:33). The concepts which have emanated from man run contrary to that reality; the ways of life developed by him are also contrary to reality. The Quran claims that right view and way of life are those which are revealed to man through true, authentic and universal knowledge. Hence, the real object of the Quran is to identify the truth and reality of life, society and the world and show man the right way of life. Going away from them is the source of destruction, chaos and crisis in life (Al- Baqarah, 2:11-13). The understanding of this truth of life and the world has been established based on a powerful ethical discourse supported by historical and empirical evidences.

The current dominant paradigm of science being based on reason and sense perception lacks true, authentic, comprehensive and universal understanding. We posit that a deeper analysis of the metaphysics of science reveals the fact that the current understanding also lacks any rational argument and historical and empirical evidence. To correct this error requires the acquisition of true, authentic, and universal knowledge; however, the so-called Enlightenment replaced such knowledge with thought and understanding based upon conjecture and speculation. As a result, we no longer correctly understand such things as science, scientific analysis, scientific understanding and scientific thinking.[8] For example, the use of term science in modern period was confined to the study of the world of nature alone (Ali and Chishti, 2015:32). If it was extended to the social phenomena it always extended in the same way as it was used for the study of natural phenomena. This was not the case of Islamic science. In fact, the empirical method was used in Islamic sciences in the intellectual journey of spiritual discovery as an indispensable method (Iqbal,1994:14). One wonders why the rational and empirical inquiries were confined to the study of the specific areas or subject matters. We posit that these methods of inquiry were not applied to metaphysical and spiritual issues because true, authentic, and universal knowledge was rejected.

Clearly, we need true, authentic, and universal knowledge to understand life, society and the world. Our dependence upon reason and sense perception continues to move us toward an uncertain understanding of the truth and reality of life, society

and the world. It is obvious that all of our discussions and debates in modern world are based upon an uncertain foundation.

Rethinking of Modern Science is the Need of Humanity

No doubt the contemporary literature presents modern science as being no more than a systematic inquiry especially that which is based on observation and experiment and confine it to the study of the natural world. In spite of this, it has its own philosophy and metaphysics that was denied in the initial stage of the development of modern science. However, in recent years this reality was realized and accepted. In our opinion science as a systematic study and understanding should not be confined to the study of the natural world alone. We should give due consideration to the true and realistic understanding of science in a comprehensive and holistic manner because in truth and reality the study of philosophy and metaphysics of science is the jurisdiction of science itself. Modern science focuses only on the functioning of the natural world but ignores the question of the creator of the natural world. This question is considered out of the jurisdiction of scientific inquiry and scientific method. Hence, one can rightly say that a study which does not give any recognition to the question of Creator on the basis of true, authentic, and universal knowledge and does not cover all aspects loses, on one side, to be considered as a systematic study and, on the other, scientific. A true systematic and scientific study must cover all aspects of the world of nature, physical and metaphysical, legal and moral, ethical and spiritual. A study which focuses on physical dimension alone and rejects all other aspects especially the metaphysical aspect does not deserve to be called either systematic or scientific.

One of the most striking features of modern Western science is that in reality and truth it neither rejected the metaphysics nor ignored it. In our opinion, the modern Western science has its own metaphysics as no discipline can sustains to survive and be called a discipline if it rejects metaphysics. The metaphysics of modern science is not based on true, authentic, and universal knowledge; it is based on metaphysical conjecture and assumptions. In recent decades a few contentious scholars have realized this truth and reality of modern science. Majority of scholars still argue that science deals with physical world, it has nothing to do with the world of metaphysics. We argue a systematic, correct, true, authentic, realistic and comprehensive study is that which fulfils, on one side, the criterion of observation, experiment, measurement and verification as well as the true, authentic and universal knowledge of the natural world and, on the other, takes into consideration

all aspects in an holistic and comprehensive manner. The idea of 'science' as a systematic study based on empirical evidence and rational understanding was motivated by true, authentic and universal knowledge (Ali, 2016: 34-37). Due to this foundation, ideas such as the idea of science, the existence of life, society and the world were understood differently from the modern Western science.

The science which was developed based on true, authentic, and universal knowledge and in line with the truth and reality of life, society and the world was supposed to be called as truth-based science. At the time of the birth of the idea of science {as it is understood in modern sense} it was never called as Islamic science (Nasr, 2001: 59-64; Alparsalan, 1996: 33-36 and 2014: 29-57). The term Islamic science is a modern term which was used to differentiate it from the modern Western science. The Islamic sciences were different from modern Western sciences in many ways. More explicitly, one can safely say Islamic sciences were different due to their epistemological, methodological, metaphysical and philosophical under currents.[9] The so-called issues of modern Western science such as the issues of 'pure science', 'neutrality in science', 'value free science', 'subjectivity or objectivity in science' and 'demarcation' were not the issues of Islamic sciences. They always focus on ethical, spiritual, legal and moral dimensions of life, society and the world.

As cognitive creatures, the proponents of Islamic sciences such as al-Farabi, Ibn- Sina, Ibn- Rushd, al-Ghazali and Ibn-Khaldun had realized the fundamental truth, i.e. there is truth and reality of life, society and the world. They were convinced that without knowing that truth and reality they cannot take any step to study any part of them. Everything has to be seen, studied and understood from the point of view of truth and reality of life, society and the world which they always emphasized. The point which had been seen and confirmed by modern Western scientists that there definitely exists a system in life, society and the natural world deserves our serious attention. The modern Western scientists see the system in the universe but fail to see the Creator of the system. The truth of the existence of that system was accepted without any reference to its Creator.

Quite contrary to the modern Western scientists the practitioners of Islamic sciences had seen the truth of the Creator of system since the very inception of the idea of science. They observed, realized and accepted the Creator of the system. This emphasis on truth and reality made their studies systematic and scientific. This emphasis on truth and reality is absent in modern Western sciences, the consequences of which have appeared in the form of destruction, chaos and crisis in

the world instead of and rather than peace, security and development. All Islamic sciences were developed from the perspective of the truth and reality of life, society and the world and included in their purview all branches of knowledge. It is appropriate to the people of the world to rethink their thinking about modern Western science and its philosophy and bring them in line with truth and reality of life, society and the world. Nothing in this world is beyond rethinking except the truth and reality of life, society and the world. The basic role of Islamic sciences, therefore, in our time is to direct all their intellectual activities to point out the false foundation of the modern Western sciences and their philosophies and aims.

If there are some people who are convinced then they need to replace the false foundation by the foundation of truth and reality of life, society and the world. For this big change we need true, authentic and universal knowledge. We cannot survive based on metaphysical speculation, philosophical conjecture, assumptions, guess work, imaginations, desirous, fancies, biased and prejudiced attitudes and reactions. The Islamic sciences always avoid them and stand for change and development.

The Truth and Reality of True, Authentic, and Universal Knowledge

For understanding the truth and reality of life, society and the world we look for a comprehensive data and we find it from the Quran and realize that it speaks of the existence and availability of true, authentic, and universal knowledge in terms of revealed knowledge or revelation (al-Baqarah, 2:38; al-Araf, 7:52) and presents a powerful ethical discourse along with historical and empirical evidence. An analysis and examination of its claims sheds light on one of its discourse's internal facts: It asks people to consider its ethical discourse, rational arguments, and provide historical and empirical evidence and then deduce whether it contains the true, authentic, and universal knowledge or not.

Many people generally perceive the Quran as the source of religious knowledge; however, it does not confirm this. The Quranic discourse does contain in it some important dimensions that deserve our attention. First, it indisputably offers a model of empirical, historical, critical and analytical thinking in which there is no place for conjecture and speculation.

Secondly, the Quran makes it clear that whatever anybody wants to say it must be based on sound knowledge. Whatever is said in the Quran it is based on sound knowledge of Allah SWT.

Surely We have brought them a Book which We expounded with knowledge; a guidance and a mercy to those who understand [believe] (Al-Quran, 7:52), Allah bears witness that whatever He has revealed to you, He has revealed with His knowledge (Al-Quran, 4:166), Were you to follow their desires in disregard of the knowledge which has come to you, you will surely be deemed among the wrong-doers (Al-Quran, 2:145).

The Quran makes it clear that one's dependence on conjecture and fancy instead of knowledge is not a reasonable attitude.

And were you indeed to follow the vain desires of people after the true knowledge had come to you, none will be your supporter against Allah, and none will have the power to shield you from His punishment (Al-Quran, 13: 37).

Thirdly, we are told clearly that we do not have any sources to get the sound knowledge required to make any statement - : "Does he have any knowledge of the world beyond the ken of sense perception, and therefore, clearly sees [the Truth]?" (Al-Quran, 53:33) and "Many indeed say misleading things without knowledge, driven merely by their desires (Al-Quran, 6: 19)."

Fourth, we need knowledge of the metaphysical world, which the Quran claims to provide via clear signs. Rejecting these signs based on rationality, historicity, and empiricism seems to be difficult, for they are supported by just such evidence. Hence, the Quran asserts that the principle and method of understanding is to follow, as a prerequisite, the true, authentic and universal knowledge granted by Allah SWT. As all the creation of Allah SWT is not a human activity, Allah's existence is by itself a truth and a reality.

> Allah, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting by Whom all subsist, there is no Creator but He. Neither slumber seizes Him, nor sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth…He knows what lies before them and what is hidden from them, whereas they cannot attain to anything of His knowledge save what He wills them to attain, … He is All-High, All-Glorious (Al-Quran, 2: 255)"; "Allah is All-Powerful as well as All-Wise (Al-Quran, 2:220)"; "…Allah has full knowledge of everything (Al-Quran, 2: 231)".

In addition, "Allah is All-Powerful as well as All-Wise" [Al-Quran, 2: 220) and " Allah has full knowledge of everything" (Al-Quran 2: 231)

As the Creator of everything, Allah SWT knows what His creatures need.

We said: 'Get you down from here, all of you, and guidance [knowledge] shall come to you from Me: then, whoever will follow My guidance need have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Al-Quran, 2:38)

Such statements seem to be enough to establish that this kind of knowledge exists.

Fifth, it asserts that speculation and conjecture cannot produce any conclusive knowledge, especially about the metaphysical world: "Most of them only follow conjecture; and surely conjecture can be no substitute for truth – that is true, authentic and universal knowledge. Allah is well aware of whatever they do (Al-Quran, 10:36) and While they have no knowledge thereof. They only follow their conjecture, and verily, conjecture is no substitute for the Truth (Al-Quran, 53:28).

Sixthly, it evaluates and analyzes past nations and communities to present a clear understanding about life's journey and identifies the fundamental causes of rise and fall of nations by discussing their scientific, technological, and intellectual achievements based upon a sound criterion of scientific analysis. The Quran, which does not deny the importance of material development and technological advancement (al-Qasas, 28:77), argues in favour of one's spiritual existence.

And remember how He made you heirs to [the tribe of] Ad and settle you firmly on earth, so that you [are able to] build for yourselves castles on its plains and carve out mountains [to serve you] as dwellings: remember, then, Allah's blessings, and do not act wickedly on earth by spreading corruption (Al-Quran, 7:74).

Seventh, it points out that without identifying and applying the truth and reality of life and the world, all of their achievements could not guarantee a life of peace, happiness, prosperity, security, and quality. In fact, this failure engendered chaos, crisis, corruption, and destruction (Al- Mumin, 40:82-83; Al-Anam, 6:6).

Finally, the Quran presents a criterion of thinking and scientific understanding, the most important aspect of which is intimately related to the claim of the availability of the knowledge described above. First, it challenges humanity: "Among them are also the unlettered folk who do not know about the Books but cherish baseless wishes and merely follow their conjectures (Al-Quran, 2:79); "Do

you attribute to Allah something about which you have no knowledge?" (Al-Quran, 2:81); and "But most people do not know the Truth, and have, therefore, turned away from it" (Al-Quran, 21: 25).

It also rejects all philosophical and ideological claims of relativism, pragmatism, empiricism, rationalism, and scientism. In terms of the metaphysical domain, it accepts the need and necessity of true, authentic, and universal knowledge from which humanity has benefitted since its creation.

> [O Muhammad] We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the offspring of Jacob, and Jesus and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David Psalms.(4:163)...Those who denied this Truth and barred others from the way of Allah have indeed strayed far away (Al-Quran, 4:168).

It also clarifies that all communities and nations have thought, studied, analyzed, and understood life and the world in terms of either based on conjecture or speculation or of true, authentic, and universal knowledge. It also proves that August Comte's [1798-1857] Law of the Three Stages of Human Development is just a theory, for it has not been tested and verified based upon sound criteria of critical and scientific thinking or supported by historical and empirical evidence. The Quran repeatedly argues that it contains the latter type of knowledge – Allah's revelation throughout history, but in different forms and styles – and invites all people to verify and test its claims.

All post-Enlightenment intellectual, scholarly, scientific, and technological activities have been grounded upon conjecture and speculation. The Quran has this to say about these so-called philosophical, ethical, scientific, empirical, critical, and rational studies: "No one can inform you of the truth save the All-Aware (Al-Quran, 35:14); "Say: "None in the heavens and on Earth has knowledge of the Unseen save Allah" (Al-Quran, 27:65); "Or is it that they have access to [the Truths in] the realm beyond sense-perception which they are writing down?" (Al-Quran, 52:41).

Based on aforementioned debate we conclude that the Quran presents true, authentic, and universal knowledge. Therefore, it does not accept conjecture and speculation as the correct foundation for intellectual understanding and scientific confirmation of life and the world.

The Definition and Characteristics of Islamic Sciences

Before elaborating the characteristics of Islamic sciences we would like to emphasise that the metaphysical foundation of Islamic sciences is based on ethical, historical and empirical evidences. The use of adjective 'Islamic' should not be confused with religious. The use of adjective Islamic represent a special metaphysical position and qualifies sciences as based on knowledge and truth of life, society and the world (Alparsalan, 1996: 5-7). The Islamic sciences always work based on data and its analysis. They do not confine to any particular dimension of reality such as modern Western natural sciences confine to the study of the natural world (Alparsalan, 1996: 33-36).[10] Hence, it is necessary to understand an important aspect of Islamic sciences. They transcend those cognitive tools or strategies that may be applied by the practioners of modern Western sciences to increase the possibility of clear perceptions of life, society and the world. Islamic sciences may be defined as intellectual efforts that help evaluate, analyze, conceptualize, and develop an accurate understanding of things as they are and work within a system and of the issues of vision and mission of life and society. They vigorously apply rational framework and historical and empirical tools, as well as certain skills and techniques, to understand things, statements, policies, or programs; help replace incorrect notion of things, ideas, concepts, and theories and models; and explain the importance and significance of spirituality, legality and moral rules and principles. The Islamic sciences may also be defined in another way, for example, they are those sciences which are developed to conduct some intellectual activities to remove the misconceptions that people have about reality and to make reality   manifest to them. They are motivated by true, authentic and universal knowledge and work in line with truth and reality of life, society and the world. They study systematically the problems of life, society and the world and everything of the world along with the application of rational and empirical methods and tools to have a better, true, correct, authentic, realistic and comprehensive understanding of them. Thus acquired knowledge is used to improve the conditions of life, society and the world and give them true purpose and direction. These Islamic sciences were replaced during the modern period by the modern Western sciences which had confined to the study of the natural world. They have now lost their credibility due to incorrect foundation and thus creating destruction instead of helping to improve the conditions of life.

As detailed above, the modern Western sciences have been reduced to the level of mere studies of physical aspects without referring to their metaphysical

dimensions. Metaphysical dimensions are not considered as the integral part of modern Western sciences. But the only reality is that one sort of metaphysics is replaced by another metaphysics. There is nothing in this world without its philosophy and metaphysics. Each and every branch of knowledge and sciences are deeply rooted within metaphysics which has been denied. If we accept that there are laws of nature which do exist and work, this statement by itself is a metaphysical position. All tools, techniques and methods which are applied in modern Western sciences just to go to the level of material existence. As a result of this, they have a partial understanding of the things. Due to this, they have lost their true meanings, purposes, and characteristics: to help improve our process of studies and conditions of life.

In the light of the above discussion we contend that the Islamic sciences focus on the study of life, society and the world in a comprehensive manner. In other words Islamic sciences study complete man, complete society and the complete world. Their areas of specialization may be different but they are intimately integral to each other. All Islamic sciences as a matter of fact follow empirical and rational method. They do not ignore one at the cost of another. Look for example at the following statements of the Quran which are related to the natural and social phenomena but used for the establishment of the truth of the existence of Allah SWT:

> And of His Signs is that He shows you lightning, arousing both fear and hope, and sends down water from the sky and revives the earth after it is dead. Indeed there are Signs in this for those who use their reason (al-Quran, 30:24).[11]

Another unique aspect of Islamic sciences is their emphasis on this world as well as the next world. They plan to make people successful in this world so that they can be successful in the next world. The next world is as real to them as this world. Unlike the modern Western sciences, the Islamic sciences do not neglect the reality of next world. They take in to consideration the complete world. They understand based on an ethical inquiry supported by historical and empirical evidence that the dominant paradigm of knowledge and sciences and also technology has been suffering from some basic flaws. The Islamic sciences, therefore, do not work within the framework of the modern Western paradigm of knowledge and science. They even do not work as a part of them. They work independently based on the framework of truth and reality of life, society and the world. The ship in which we all are sailing is moving very fast but without true,

realistic and authentic purpose and direction. The modern Western sciences have created an unending race of materialism and technology advancement. When we look at the contribution of dominant system of knowledge and sciences we also observe they have generated the unlimited sense of greediness, arrogance and ignorance as a result of which people face difficulties to eliminate corruption and crimes. We are all having failed to create a world of peace, security and safety. We have observed the First World War, the Second World War, then cold war and now war on terrorism. The people of the world at present are suffering from incorrect views of life, society and the world as well as acute crisis and chaos. We do not see any sign that can be helpful to overcome the problems. They require a genuine change of paradigm. It needs an intellectual revolution. Many people who are depressed with the current paradigm of life are looking for change and revolution but within the same paradigm of modern Western world. The Islamic sciences have to launch a movement for an Intellectual Scientific Revolution [ISR] for a revolutionary intellectual change through the process of education, intellectual pursuits and a new type of scholarship which must be deeply rooted within the paradigm of truth and reality of life, society and the world fully enlighten by true, authentic and universal knowledge. This requires unprecedented and unparallel intellectual creative efforts that can be met by the proponents of the Islamic sciences.

In modern period we committed several philosophical errors. We crossed the limit of our faculties and entered into that jurisdiction of metaphysical domain which was not meant for our intellectual exercise. Without the light of true, authentic and universal knowledge our efforts to see metaphysical reality generally fail. We did not realize that we need to follow a fundamental rule: we are supposed to see and observe the things around us and study them in the light of data – a comprehensive data. Instead of looking for relevant but new data we focussed on reason and sense perception due to overwhelmed influence of desires and fancies. In this way, we went against truth and reality as expounded by true, authentic and universal knowledge and still sailing in the same ship of speculation, conjecture, discursive philosophies and metaphysical ignorance. The existence of true, authentic and universal knowledge was initially neglected and finally denied.

The modern Western sciences claim they focus on the study of physical phenomena based on observation and experiment. They also claim they are able to observe, weigh, measure, verify and experience that reality. The truth is that they observe only one side of reality. They do not observe the other side of the reality

because they are not fully equipped with those skills which are necessary for the observation and experience of metaphysical dimension. Without the state of knowledge and true cognition, the observation of the state of total reality is not possible. After the denial of true, authentic and universal knowledge which was capable to equip people with necessary skills and the capabilities through which one can observe and see the non-physical dimension of life, society and the world, they lost insights into the reality of metaphysical world. As we have said earlier the separation of the metaphysics of the reality is not possible. What is done in the name of truth is that the reality of the truth-based metaphysics was replaced by conjecture-based metaphysics. He who does not posse the true, authentic and universal knowledge is similar to one who is not able to distinguish between right and wrong and does not know what is reality, may be alive to observe something on the physical plane, but his essential spirit of observation of total reality will go off. He may be biologically a living being but is certainly not a spiritual human being. A spiritually living being is one who can observe the total reality beyond any doubt.

The truth is that the physical dimension of our reality cannot be separated from spiritual, legal, moral and consequential realities of life. Each one of them is intimately related with one another. All these realities are observable if we develop the skills of *taqwah, tazkiyah, tarbiyah, zikr, fikr, ihsan, tadabbur, tafakkur* etc. All the above mentioned dimensions become reality when we take true, authentic and universal knowledge as the basis of methodology. No lay man can apply the scientific skills for scientific observation except professional. The same is applicable to the practitioners of Islamic sciences. They need training of abovementioned skills and capabilities.

The Scientific and Rational Method of Islamic Sciences

The idea of empirical understanding was motivated and inspired by the reading and understanding of the Quran – the source of true, authentic and universal knowledge. The Quran always draw the attention of its readers to the physical and human phenomena and asked them to observe carefully and reflect on their mechanism. This observation, according to the Quran, will help people to understand the existence, place, and role of the Creator. The data of the Quran forcefully assert that life is not without any genuine purpose. It has an ethical basis and thus spiritual existence. To establish the truthfulness and reality of this claim it provides rational arguments and gets the support of the historical and empirical evidence which are provided in the Quran itself. They are self-sufficient (Al-Dhariyat, 51:56; Al-Hadid,

57:20). However, it seems that to teach us Allah SWT followed in the Quran the most suitable method for explaining the truth and reality of life and the world. This method has several important features which had constituted the 'scientific' nature of the discourse of the Quran. It says clearly without the state of knowledge and true cognition, the observation of the state of total reality is not possible. One finds, for example, in the Quran emphasis on the following features:

First, it presents a very powerful ethical discourse. It rejects speculation and conjecture. It stresses the need of knowledge – true, authentic and universal. Hence, the Quran asserts that it contains in it true, authentic and universal knowledge that only gives true, authentic, realistic, comprehensive and universal understanding of the metaphysical world. Hence, Allah SWT granted that knowledge to mankind through the process of revelation (22: 1-7; 23: 12-27; 25: 4-19).

Second, the discourse of the Quran is based on the Knowledge of Allah SWT (7:52; 4:166; 2:145). Allah SWT being the Creator of universe has His own knowledge. He neither is in the process of creating knowledge nor borrows from others. He elaborated everything based on knowledge. He, therefore, wants us to study, investigate and speak about things based on that knowledge which is granted to us.

Third, a critical evaluation is made of the history, the views of philosophers and the founders of religions and the existing body of so-called knowledge [11: 18-31]. The critical evaluation, hence, became one of the indispensable stages in the method of scientific enquiry.

Fourth, it is also supported by a number of parables and examples. [We have indeed propounded for mankind all kinds of parables in this Quran that they may take heed (39: 27).

Fifth, it is followed by historical and empirical evidences. There is emphasis on this data [We have indeed propounded for mankind all kinds of parables in this Quran that they may take heed (12: 111; 13: 2-13; 39: 27).

Sixth, a few important themes have been repeatedly discussed. [Allah has revealed the best teachings, a self-consistent Book which repeats its contents in manifold forms (39:23).

Seventh, every subject is presented in a simple way so that everyone can benefit from it: In the Quran We have explained things to people in myriad ways (30: 58).

Eighth, it asks people to use the faculty of sense perception, historical evidence and then think critically, reflect analytically and finally understand things deeply (10:24; 29:19-20; 30:21-2; 45:12-13).

The beauty of the Quranic method is that it did not emphasise thinking and reflection as first principles. They are not used at the very outset. They come after going through [i] the process of ethical discourse [ii] critical evaluation of the past nations [iii] and referring to the historical and [iv] empirical evidences, [v] providing parables and examples [vi] explaining repeated themes and finally [vii] making simple statements. All this systematic arrangement is adopted to facilitate human beings for their ethical search and reflective understanding. So, we conclude from an ethical point of view that the Islamic sciences depend on this approach to know the truth and the nature of reality of the problems. The approach that depends on human faculties alone practically end up with conjecture and speculation, hence, does not fulfil the criteria of scientific rationality. This truth and reality of scientific rational method was never realized by the modern Western science. In this way the approach of Islamic sciences is totally different from that of modern science as a result of which the complete truth and total reality become known to people. It does not remain any more a mystery or dogma. Allah SWT informs us that life, society and the world are not material alone as they have been misunderstood by majority of philosophers of all periods. They have been created by the Creator Allah SWT. Hence, life, society and the world have both the spiritual and material existence. Reality is not simply material but a combination of spiritual and material, the legal and moral and consequential dimensions. See below the diagram:
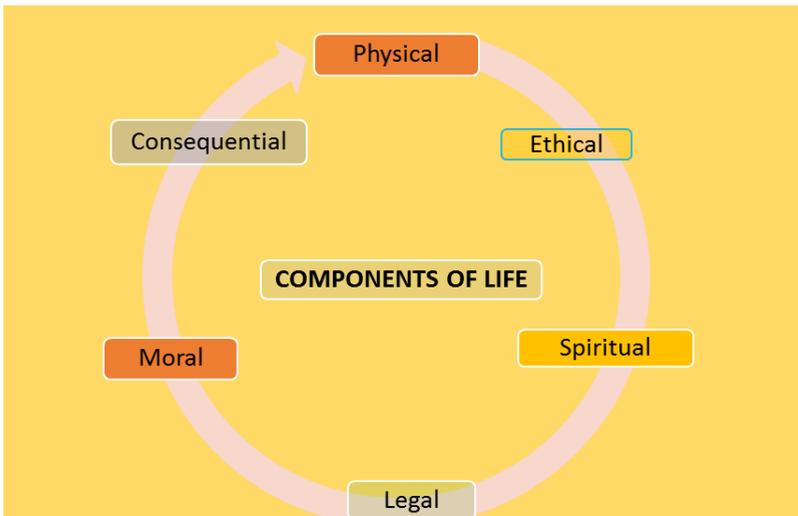
The truth and reality of the existence of Allah SWT as the Creator of the universe and also the existence of the true, authentic and universal knowledge is established based on ethical discourse supported by historical and empirical evidence. This is the spirit and nature of Islamic sciences which had been neglected certain extend in modern period.

The Challenges and Goals of Islamic Sciences

The challenges to Islamic sciences are internal. They have to be addressed keeping in mind the ethical, spiritual, legal, moral and consequential components of life along with physical. A religious mode of interpretation of Islamic sciences will not suffice to sustain them anymore. We need to identify the problematic aspects of Islamic sciences such as the religious approach, the expressions and the use of language which should not damage the image of Islamic sciences, despite the fact that they are frequently used in discourse on Islamic sciences. They are used even by the experts of Islamic sciences. The Islamic sciences are always explained by using that language which is generally used by Orientalists. Look at the some of the expressions such as:

> "…*in Islam*, all branches of knowledge are interconnected and none is divorced from *religion*";

> "Does Islamic science mean a systematic and organized field of study? Answer: Yes, all intellectual rational and transmitted disciplines in *Islamic civilization* were to be designated by the term "Islamic sciences";

> "'Islamic science' in its singular form refers specifically to the natural and mathematical sciences.";

> "Science ultimately means organized knowledge, and "Islamic sciences" are those branches of knowledge that have been cultivated in *Islamic civilization* according to the *principles of Islamic revelation*";

> "Ibn Sina and al-Biruni functioned in an *Islamic universe* that they understood *in terms of the Quranic revelation.* They all *believed* that the world had a Creator" and discuss the nature and scope of Islamic

sciences from the *perspective of Islamic intellectual tradition*."
[Emphasis added].[12]

For us these types of expressions are problematic. On one side, these expressions limit the scope of Islamic sciences to the specific community and on the other give the impression that they are fundamentally religious. The truth is that the Islamic sciences are meant for humanity and deal with life, society and the world as well as the emerging problems resulting from their interaction. Hence, it is very important for those who are engaged in the discourse of Islamic sciences to see the implications of these sorts of expressions. In any case we cannot scarify the universality of Islamic sciences and people-oriented dimension. A deeper reflection reveals to us that these expressions demonstrate some sort of exclusivist approach and limit the use of Islamic sciences to the benefits of Muslims alone and fail to attract thinking minds of the world. This is the problem of advocates of Islamic sciences. The Islamic sciences transcend the boundaries of countries and religions and work for the wellbeing of life, and society. So, we argue, in the context of changing circumstances the role and aim of Islamic sciences should be as a whole the introduction of an Intellectual Scientific Revolution for the purpose of making the *desire* of the world a concrete reality – achievement of development – sustainable development - leading to success here in this world and also in the next world and seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT.

The study which is conducted based on truth and reality of life, society and the world and in the light of true, authentic and universal knowledge cannot be confined to some people or to a particular civilization. What is the truth and reality of life is explained in a universal manner addressing to people of the world. The issue that life is a mixture of physical, ethical, spiritual, legal, moral and consequential components is not an isolated issue. It is the reality of life. For a scientific and systematic study and understanding of human nature and relations the knowledge of all the components is the need of everyone. This holistic and comprehensive view of life is the basis of Islamic sciences that has to be shared with everyone. This view of life is not at all the concern of Islamic civilization or religion alone. It is the result of a thorough investigation based on rational exercise, historical and empirical evidences. This is not some sort of religious or dogmatic claim. The understanding, that life is created by Creator, logically entails that it has some definite purpose. The reality of purposeful life constitutes its spirituality. Hence, according to spirituality, we are under obligation to follow the instructions of the Creator and Giver of the purpose. The Creator did not keep these things secret. He

disclosed everything rationally supported by historical and empirical evidences. This aspect of spirituality of human life distinguishes it from the life of other creatures and makes possessor of life responsible and accountable. The denial or negligence of sense of accountability, on one side, takes man against reality and truth and, on the other, turns him into a man of ignorance and arrogance and, finally, destroys humanity as such. Human beings become independent and demonstrate arrogance and do not feel shy to produce weapons of mass destruction and launch wars at all levels.

The spiritual sense of life creates a sense of responsibility as well as the sense of accountability, legality and morality. People in general understand that the Giver of life has not granted total freedom. In fact, in a civilized world no one enjoys the absolute freedom. Everyone is subject to some laws and code of conduct otherwise they cannot live a civilized life. Hence, the Creator granted to mankind with a set of laws and code of conduct called the *Shariah* and *morals*. The application of the *Shariah* and *morals* is as integral to idea of science as observation and experiment. Other than the *Shariah* a complete set of morals is also granted to mankind. It constitutes the body of morals that are taught by Islam. The identification of the morally sound ideas and actions are not left to the intellectual exercise and wisdom of mankind rather they are identified clearly. Hence, they are under obligation to practice those morals during the process of scientific investigation and development of science and scientific knowledge.

Finally, it was made clear beyond doubt that we like it or not we will witness the consequences of our thinking and actions. This constitutes the consequentiality of life. This reminds to everyone especially to scientists that for the sake of domination or profit they cannot produce whatever they like. For their right or wrong views and actions they themselves in their individual personality are responsible and accountable. No one can shift his or her responsibility and accountability to others. All of us are accountable. No one can escape from accountability. All these components make life meaningful and worthy of living. As we have said earlier any study that neglects any part of this whole does not constitute the category of systematic or scientific study.

Hence, the Islamic sciences are not only different from the modern Western sciences in terms of ethics, spirituality, legality, morality and consequentiality but rather under obligation to make them an integral part of scientific investigation and discoveries and discourse. They are spiritually motivated; therefore, their nature is empirical, historical and rational. They include under their purview all sciences:

natural, social, applied, spiritual, ethical, technological, medical and moral. Therefore, they should be called as truth-based and reality-oriented sciences instead of Islamic sciences.[13]

The Islamic sciences are bound to develop a culture of knowledge and critical, analytical, scientific and creative thinking, hard working and in depth research. So, the goals   of Islamic sciences can be related to the intellectual and material needs of contemporary times.

One of the goals of Islamic science is to liberate Islam from its narrowest, nationalistic and exclusivist stereotypes and assign to it its universal role. Another goal of Islamic sciences is to bring change in existing mind set of people and conditions of life and guarantee true development free from chaos, crisis, crimes, corruption, weapons and wars: a development which shares with every single individual the fruits of development that is safety, security, peace, quality of life, prosperity and happiness. Finally, we would say another goal of Islamic sciences is to inform people about the right vision and mission of life so that they can fulfil their purpose of life. We need to introduce change and development in order to raise quality of life and society.

So, we argue, in the context of changing circumstances the role and aim of Islamic sciences should be as a whole the introduction of an Intellectual Scientific Revolution. This entails the recognition, acknowledgement and internationalization of truth and reality without which the goal of development cannot be achieved. Change and development have to be done based on the truth and reality of life, society and the world. Hence, Islamic sciences should have to work and search for truthful solutions to the problems of life and society.

Focus of all Islamic sciences is, therefore, on improvement and development of life, society and the world. Hence the motto is to:

> [So] excel with one another in good works. [2: 148] Be watchful over
> the Prayers, and over praying with the utmost excellence... [2: 238]
> [They believe in Allah and in the Last Day and enjoin what is right
> and forbid what is wrong,] and hasten to excel each other in doing
> good. These are among the righteous. [3: 114] It is Allah Who created
> death and life that He might try you as to which of you is excellent in
> deed (al-Quran, 67:2).

Conclusion

The revival and development of Islamic sciences seems to be timely and urgently. They should be developed based on rational, historical and empirical foundation instead of and rather than with reference to religion or on religious lines. Consciously, we need to avoid the religious tone and terms and develop new style of expression. For this purpose, either we need to construct new terminologies or at least give new meanings and connotations to old words and terms. Without demonstrating creativity the originality of Islamic sciences cannot be established. The new but appropriate interpretations of the texts are badly needed. We must stop both the attitude of looking backward and responding to the external challenges. We have repeatedly argued elsewhere that we need to address our internal problems. We have also demonstrated here that most of our problems are due to improper look into the main sources. The truth and reality is that we hardly go to the normative sources. We always look into the views of our past scholars. We draw frameworks and conclusions based on their writings. We do not want to belittle their contributions in any way. We do recognize their great contributions but as a principle we need to look into the true, authentic and universal knowledge at the very beginning. There is no substitute to that. We hardly develop any framework of thinking, analysis and examination based on the Quran and the *Sunnah*. We are still using the terms of *fard kifaya* and *fard ain* or *uloom aqaliya* and *naqaliya* or acquired knowledge or blameworthy sciences or praise worthy sciences. We have to understand that the Islamic sciences, to be honest to the truth and reality and also to the true, authentic and universal knowledge, have to take as a whole all the components of life into consideration. Perhaps we need to start a new look into the normative sources to address to the problems of humanity. Humanity is in need of new paradigm and frameworks.

We have provided here some explanations for the sake of general understand of the Islamic sciences which might be relevant to all sciences, all branches of knowledge and all disciplines. However, each discipline and science needs to outline their own issues based on their subject matter and may be methodology. Each of them is subject to a thorough revision, examination and improvement. This realization is the essence of our reflection and analysis. May Allah grant us knowledge and wisdom!

Note

1. See for a fresh evaluation and examination of concepts of critical and scientific thinking, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, "The Foundation and Principles of Critical Thinking", The American Journal of Islamic and Social Sciences, 33:4, Fall 2016, 132-144; Muhammad Mumtaz Ali and Siddiq Ali Chishti, "The Contemporary Intellectual Crisis and Lack of Clear Perception of Science and Scientific Thinking", Revelation and Science, 5:2, 2015, 31-48.

2. See for example, the comments of Syyed Hossein Nasr. He says at the time of the development of Islamic Sciences during HÉrËn al-RashÊd or al-MaÑmËn, the Muslim community as a whole was not able to "defend the principles of faith through logical arguments, as could other religious groups, nor could they appeal to logical proofs to demonstrate the truth of the tenets of Islam.", *Science and Civilization in Islam*, ABC International Group, Inc.: Chicago, 2001, 70.

3. Whether modern sciences were neutral and universal or subject to a particular view point, see, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *Islamization of Modern Science and its Philosophy: a contemporary civilizational discourse*, IIUM Press: Kuala Lumpur, 2016.

4. For a recent effort which is made to redefine the notion of 'science' see, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *Islamization of Modern Science and its Philosophy: a contemporary civilizational discourse*, IIUM Press: Kuala Lumpur, 2016.

5. Some efforts have been made in this regards by Alparsalan Acikgenc, *Islamic Science: Towards a Definition*, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization: Kuala Lumpur, 1996; Muzaffar Iqbal, *Science and Islam*, Greenwood Press: London, 2007; Interview by Muzaffar Iqbal on "The Meaning, Scope, and Future of Islamic Sciences" with Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Sciences*, 11:1, 2013.

6. See on metaphysics and metaphysics of science, E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundation of Modern Science*, Humanities Press: New Jersey, 1952; Y. R. M. Simon, *An Introduction to Metaphysics of Knowledge*, Fordham University Press: New York, 1990; Stephen Laurence & Cynthia Macdonald, *Contemporary Readings in the Foundation of Metaphysics*, Blackwell Publishers: Massachusetts, 1998.

7. See for a detail understanding of change f metaphysics of science, Richard F. Kitchener, *The World View of Contemporary Physics: Does it Need New Metaphysics*, State University of New York Press, 1988.

8. See for detail examination of the metaphysical foundation of science and its meaning, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *Islamization of Modern Science and its Philosophy: a contemporary civilizational discourse*, IIUM Press: Kuala Lumpur, 2016.

9. The epistemological, methodological, metaphysical and philosophical differences were not noted by scholars on Islamic Science such as Georg Saliba, *Islamic Science and the*

Making of the European Renaissance, The MIT Press: Cambridge, 2007; Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg, "The Origins of Islamic Science", http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/origins-islamic-science, retrieved on 12/02/20017.

10. For a detail discussion see, Interview by Muzaffar Iqbal on "The Meaning, Scope, and Future of Islamic Sciences" with Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Sciences*, 11:1, 2013.

11. See for more arguments based on natural world, Al-Rum 30:20-29.

12. For details of the quotes see, Interview by Muzaffar Iqbal on "The Meaning, Scope, and Future of Islamic Sciences" with Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Sciences*, 11:1, 2013; Mehdi Golshani, How to Make Sense of "Islamic science"?, The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, 17: 3, ,1-21, 2000.

13. For truth-based science see, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *Islamization of Modern Science and its Philosophy: a contemporary civilizational discourse*, IIUM Press: Kuala Lumpur, 2016.

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Jihadi Women

Social Movements & Collective Action

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Abstract

This article is based on three decades of ethnographic research conducted in Lebanon, while I relied on discourse analysis of relevant sources to comprehend similar phenomena elsewhere. The controversial and timely subject of female radicalization via suicide operations has received a lot of attention, but hardly on the pedagogical level, especially those related to national struggles. The framing of the argument rests on the understanding of self-sacrifice or "martyrdom" in relation to dignity, honor, and symbolic capital. I employ Castells' conceptualization of social movement as "purposive collective actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society." In line with this analysis, relative deprivation theories stress that: "a group member engages in collective action any time that she or he is acting as a representative of the group and where the action is directed at improving the conditions of the group as a whole." Thus, self-sacrifice could be classified as an altruistic act aimed at furthering collective action. The gender aspect is highlighted because my interest is in understanding the mindset of female suicide bombers in relation to their male counterparts when it comes to national resistance and liberation struggle. In this setting, the sociological distinction between feminine and masculine roles simply disappears since both genders contribute on par – in the service of a collective action for a common cause – through an "act of war" or *bellum justum* (just war tradition). Thus, collective action seems to justify "why a person might forgo his or her personal interests and choose instead to take actions designed to the ingroup as a whole." This article gives an overview of women who engage in suicide operations in combat (targeting soldiers) and noncombat (targeting civilians) situations,

mainly in Lebanon and the Middle East, but with heuristic social comparisons to the Far East. My finding is that the pedagogy of martyrdom seems to rests on two main pillars: (1) symbolic and religious capital (honor, dignity,

nationalism); (2) agency: empowerment in selecting the time and place to defy and face a superior enemy, thus attempting to balance the lack of capabilities.

Key Words: Self-sacrifice; national resistance; suicide; martyrdom; social movement; collective action; female suicide bombers; kamikaze; honor; dignity; symbolic capital.

Abbreviations

BKI   Babbar Khalsa International

IDF   Israeli Defence Forces

ISIS   Islamic State in Syria and Iraq

LCP   Lebanese Communist Party

LTTE   Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

PKK   Kurdistan Workers' Party

SSNP   Syrian Social Nationalist Party

Introduction: Suicide Operations and Symbolic Capital

The cross-cultural phenomenon of martyrdom is more than two millennia old, but, as recent events continue to demonstrate, it is still a prominent feature of contemporary culture. Whether one admires or abhors martyrs, martyrdom appeals to the imagination of many, because it is a spectacle, albeit with deadly consequences. Martyrdom is also a complex power game, which is already apparent from the agonistic vocabulary in several martyrdoms. Statements about martyrs in these writings suggest that the martyrs' violent deaths imply that their opponent is defeated by them... Whether such a triumph should be interpreted in a moral, spiritual, salvation-historical or political perspective—or all of these— its impact is more than a temporary reversal of the power relations at hand. Moreover, the heroic death of the martyrs remains powerful as long as it is commemorated by certain media, writings, artifacts, monuments, internet, film [social media] or even re-enacted during community

> meetings and ritual... [it] expresses at the same time that the martyrs'
> act exemplifies the collective identity of their group (van Henten
> 2009, 239-40).

This article discusses nationalistic suicide operations; "martyrdom"; or self-sacrifice operations conducted by young girls and women in the Middle and Far East, but mainly concentrates on Lebanon as a case study. While the Lebanese Hizballah conducted twelve martyrdom operations by Shi'ite males against Israeli soldiers; in Israel, many Palestinian males and eight female suicide bombers targeted both soldiers and civilians. Although martyrdom has become the trademark of radical Islamist groups, it was not solely carried out by them. For instance, secular Lebanese political parties have conducted suicide operations targeting Israeli occupation forces. The "Lebanese Communist Party" (LCP) conducted a martyrdom operation carried out by a Christian female, while the "Syrian Social Nationalist Party" (SSNP) has conducted twelve martyrdom operations evenly divided between six women and six men belonging to different confessions and religious denominations. Moreover, a substantial number of female suicide bombers, including girls, hailed from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey – who are fighting for the establishment of a free, united, and independent Kurdistan – as well as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka and India who were struggling to found the Tamil nation.

Based on empirical and theoretical research considerations, I suggest that the common definition of martyrdom among Muslims and non-Muslims, devout and secular, is that it seems to be regarded as a form of altruistic or self-sacrificial behaviour. I propose that, for Muslims, it is based mainly on the Quranic interpretation of symbolic and religious capital; for non-Muslims, the nationalistic dimension of symbolic capital seems to be the most salient. The "martyr" acts as anti-Destin, a bronze hawk, a hard-core altruist, in which altruism is a supererogatory act, i.e. an act done beyond the call of moral duty or obligation. Bourdieu defined symbolic capital as the 'degree of accumulated *prestige*, celebrity, consecration or honour [dignity, possessed by someone and] founded on the dialectic of knowledge and recognition' (Bourdieu 1993, 7; Bourdieu 1990, 22, 111). 'Symbolic capital refers here to the status of a fighter for the cause of "true Islam" whatever that means. The Koranic verse [4:95]…, which states that "God hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons" conveys this idea of symbolic capital. The more one fights with one's "goods" or "one's person", the more one accumulates symbolic capital (Kane 2003, 22).[1] However, symbolic capital is not only confined to those who fight under the

banner of Islam; it is also employed by ethno-nationalist and other resistance movements. For instance, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) leader said in justifying resistance and martyrdom: 'Life is only a stance embodied in pride and dignity'. Dignity is defined as 'the opposite of humiliation' at the hands of the enemy; and 'death is preferable to humiliation'. Hizballah and the Palestinian Islamists employ the same discourse of "dignity", or symbolic capital in order to justify martyrdom operations against the Israeli occupying army, so do the relatives of martyrs when they endeavour to offer a rationale and justification for suicide operations. This also has to do with their conception of religious capital. According to Bourdieu, religious capital refers to the way religious knowledge is appropriated and disseminated (1971, 295-334; 1991, 1-44). Although it is proscribed in the Quran[1] to target innocent civilians, many Islamic movements have done so, most notably the notorious *Islamic State in Syria and Iraq* (ISIS).

Section L Lebanon's Secular and Religious Suicide Bombers: the Spill Over to the Palestinians

Muslim religious scholars have unanimously vilified suicide as foolish behaviour leading to perdition. They extolled and sanctioned martyrdom operations carried out in the way of God (Allah) against invading armies for the sake of liberating occupied land in wars of national resistance, whereby the martyrs blew themselves up in the enemy, intending to inflict the highest amount of possible casualties in its ranks (*Masa'il Jihadiyya* 2002, 25-42).

In the Middle East, the Lebanese case exemplifies both "Islamic" and "nationalistic martyrdom". Compared to the Iranian and Palestinian case, Khosrokhavar classifies the Lebanese case as 'ambivalent' wavering between "martyrdom" and "absurd death" because of the multi-confessional, sectarian nature of the Lebanese myriad (1995).[2] Like Lewis, Khosrokhavar argues that this along with the Israeli invasions created a 'prosperous ground for martyrdom' (2002, 221). Lewis rightly notes the causes behind this "culture of martyrdom" and suicide operations:

> If Iran's encouragement of a culture of martyrdom created the possibility for suicide attacks, the Israeli invasion created the perceived need. On an ideological level, the Israeli invasion provided an enemy against which jihad and martyrdom could be executed. Furthermore, the overwhelming disparity of force between the sides –

and the seeming Israeli indifference towards civilian casualties – facilitated the emergence of suicide bombing on a practical level by necessitating armed struggle and legitimizing any effective form of attack, no matter how extreme. Other than suicide bombing, there seems to be few options that would allow small groups to project force in Lebanon, especially into fortified areas (Lewis 2012, 71-2).

1.1 Hizballah has no Women Suicide Bombers

Since gender is a social construction linked to role setting, Hizballah's women did not participate in the war effort per se; rather, they contributed to it indirectly by being depicted as dedicated, good mothers and wives. This does not imply that they did not participate in the public sphere as industrious workers. On the contrary, Hizballah accords women a prominent role in the public sphere and regards them as valuable assets who are becoming more visible in contesting the public space with other actors, and even dominating it in some professions. After all, a tangible number of the work force in Hizballah's media institutions and a predominant number of the party's educational institutions are run by women.[3] This explains why Hizballah's twelve suicide operations were all conducted by males.

In the Lebanese case, Hizballah was not the only political party that conducted "martyrdom" operations against the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in Lebanon. Rather, Hizballah had fierce competition from secular multi-confessional Lebanese political parties such as the rightist SSNP, the leftist LCP, the Ba'th Party, and the Nasserite Social Party, especially in the years from 1985 to 1990.[4] While Hizballah conducted 12[5] martyrdom operations by Shi'ite males[6], SSNP and LCP performed martyrdom operations by both males and females of different religious denominations.

1.2 SSNP Sana Muhaydli

The SSNP's martyrdom operations offer a good illustration. Although Khosrokhavar explains the 'religious motivation' behind Hizballah's martyrdom operations, and the 'nationalistic' or 'political motivation' behind secular political parties' motivation (2002, 228), in the SSNP case, he seems to imply that, Sana Muhaydli (Al-Muqawama 1985, 120-140), the seventeen-year-old Shi'ite SSNP girl, was the only SSNP martyr.[7] In reality, like Hizballah, SSNP conducted 12 martyrdom operations in total, which included, in addition to Sana, five other

women.[8] Most likely, Khosrokhavar stresses religious capital (2002, 229-231), but seems to be misinformed about the eleven other SSNP martyrdom operations, which in addition to Shi'ites, were carried out by Sunnis, Druz, and even Christians.[9] The author would like to stress the nationalistic aspect and the multi-confessional nature of nationalistic identity, rather than limiting it to one sect. His hypothesis is to try proving that, for instance SSNP and LCP, non-Shi'ite martyrs sacrificed their lives, not as 'absurd deaths', but as symbolic capital in order to uphold the honour and dignity of their nation and liberate their land, as was the case with Hizballah martyrs, for example. Concerning Muslim and secular martyrs, Khosrokhavar makes another overgeneralization by arguing that most of the martyrs come from poor, deprived classes (grassroots) of south Lebanon (Khosrokhavar 2002, 330).[10] Based on fieldwork research, the author found out that most of the martyrs originated from the middle class; some even had university education. Also, he discovered that the martyrs came from different geographical locations in Lebanon, and not predominantly from south Lebanon as Khosrokhavar asserts. In the SSNP case, the author was told that at least four martyrs had a university education and were from the middle class; one of them was even an aristocrat Christian.[11] The SSNP martyrdom operations are based on its political ideology as stipulated by Antoun Saadeh.[12] That is why, the SSNP martyrs were not only Lebanese, but included also Syrians and Palestinians.[13] The SSNP Sana Muhaydli[14], 'the bride of the south', is one of the most celebrated woman martyrs; she was only 17 when she detonated herself in 1985 in an Israeli patrol (Cohn 2013, 158-9); (Hirst 2010, 219); (Pape 2005, 132); (Lewis 2012, 77-78); (Jaber 1997, 91-92).[15] When I interviewed her father Yusuf[16], he argued that his daughter was a martyr and that she went to heaven even though she belonged to a secular political party. As he put it, 'religion is for God, and the nation is for everyone'.[17] According to Yusuf, 'Sana sacrificed herself to rid Lebanon and Natural Syria from occupation, so that the Syrian nation can live with honour and dignity'. In highlighting the nationalistic will to power of the SSNP, Sana's father quoted Saadeh: 'In you is a power, which if actualized will change the course of history'. He ended up by saying: 'The blood that runs in our veins is not ours; rather it is the possession of our nation, when it requests it, it finds it'. As such, 'blood is the most extolled witnessing to life. It is a will that asks for death, when death is a road to life; it is a will expressed by our eternal martyrs'. Thus, building on Saadeh, Sana's father links the concept martyrdom to the life and survival of the nation: 'Our martyrs symbolize our great victories'. Further stressing the concepts of dignity, honour, sacrifice, and symbolic capital, Yusuf ended by quoting the famous poet Adonis:

'SSNP does not only provide you with bread and butter; rather, it also fulfils you with dignity and honour' *[al-hizb al-qawmi la yut'imukum khubzann, inama yushbi'ukum karama]*.

1.3 LCP LOLA Abboud

Another case in point is illustrated by the LCP upper middle-class Christian, Lola Abboud (Al-Muqawama 1985, 258-271; Lewis 2012, 77-8), the flower of the *Biqa'*, 'a courageous woman who fought for her land and for her people, and went to her death willingly… Abboud's avowedly devout Christian[18] family had already produced a long line of warrior-martyrs' (Davis 2003, 68). Lola came from the Lebanese village of al-Qar'un where Christians and Muslims live side by side in harmony and peaceful coexistence. According to Davis, Abboud became the "ideal martyr" for Palestinian women martyrs to emulate; 'she had already paved that path in Lebanon' (Davis 2003, 68, 77-79). According to her brother, Dr Fouad Elias Abboud, Lola was the 'family's last martyr' when she blew herself up amongst the Israeli soldiers attacking her village on April 20, 1985; she was only 19 back then (Davis 2003, 69). Fouad Abboud believes that the rationale for her martyrdom is that she was 'fighting for the liberation of her own homeland', as a right and a duty and out of love for her country, in order to rupture the bitter humiliation and uphold the dignity and honour of her people. He argues that 'a person is willing to die for his cause if it's a question of his very existence… All cases of martyrdom are cases of fighting for your existence… Every martyr of ours was a martyr who died in self-defence [defensive jihad]. We never went to Europe or killed Jews there. We were defending our own children…' (Davis 2003, 69-70). Dr. Abboud added: 'The freedom fighter chooses death as a final choice. He doesn't choose it from the beginning. It's after he cannot fight anymore that he decides to kill himself… And she was fighting the Israelis within her own village. She was not fighting Israelis in Israel' (Davis 2003, 70). Davis alludes to the notion that regards martyrdom as an altruistic behaviour of a supererogatory nature. Comparing Lola to 'a modern-day Joan of Arc,' she writes 'it's fair to say that Loula Abboud's actions exceeded all expectations not only for women in war, but for men as well' (2003, 72). Since her martyrdom took place the day after Easter, it could be argued that her death served as a resurrection to her people. The Abboud's family patriotism was further conveyed when Dr. Abboud acknowledged that he identifies with Hizballah and regards its leader "as a national hero" (Davis 2003, 81). Davis concludes that both Lola's mother and her brother did not perceive any antagonism between Lola's

'death and their strong Christian beliefs, even though Christianity, like Islam, forbids suicide' (2003, 84).

1.4 A Hizballah's Father's and Mother's Testimony on their Martyred Sons

Building on the notions of honour and dignity as well as the concept of symbolic capital, Munif Muhammad Ashmar offers a similar justification of martyrdom. Ashmar is a father of two Hizballah martyrs: Ali who detonated himself in the IDF in Lebanon, and Muhammad who died in the battlefield fighting them. Before he conducted the operation on March 20, 1996, in his farewell address, Ali said, '…My body will become a fire that will burn the Israeli occupier, who everyday deliberately attempts to torture and humiliate you [the people]. However, the occupier's end is near, God willing, at the hands of the Islamic Resistance'. The same rationale is offered by his father, Munif, who argues: 'When duty calls and when there are dignities that are going to be downtrodden, when the pride and the honour of the umma is going to be downtrodden by the enemy, then we will not lay idle…' (*Kawakib al-nasr* 2001, 23-35). It seems that this discourse bears a striking resemblance to the SSNP slogan of 'Life is only a stance embodied in pride and dignity', and that it is another indication of symbolic capital.

Likewise, a Hizballah martyr's mother argues along similar lines stressing the importance of dignity, honour, pride, and symbolic capital in relation to self-sacrifice. On the sunny Sunday of May 9, 1999, two female Danish journalism students and the author went to interview the mother of a Hizballah martyr[19] whose son had detonated himself in an Israeli convey in south Lebanon. The old woman lived in the southern suburb of Beirut in a humble, barely standing home. The two students experienced a "cultural shock" when they learned that they had to congratulate the mother instead of offering her their condolences. As a Lebanese, the author was not surprised, but the Danes were perplexed. They questioned how one could congratulate a mother on the loss of her own son. How could a caring, loving mother give her own son willingly to death? The visible astonishment of the Danes, however, was a serious challenge to the illiterate martyr's mother. She said, 'My daughters, if you are bitten by a snake and the poison is flowing in your blood stream, will you let it go all the way to your heart and kill you, or will you simply suck it out?' She gave another analogy; she said that if a person discovered a cancerous gland in his body would not he remove it from the root so as not to kill him? She showed us some pictures of her son without shedding a single tear; rather,

she was cool in a heeding-up manner. In particular, she argued, 'Dignity is the opposite of humiliation, and death [is preferable] to humiliation'.[20] She added that the martyr (her son) 'acted as an anti-Destin, a bronze hawk, a hard-core altruist whose greatest duty and source of pride [honour and dignity] is to sacrifice himself for the well-being of his country by killing as many as possible of his enemies'. She stressed, 'This is the greatest pride that can befall a mother'.

It seems as though the mother was reiterating – in popular culture terms – Hizballah's conceptualization of self-sacrifice as conveyed in the party's latest document, the 2009 Manifesto. Hizballah accords a high status to "martyrdom" and self-sacrifice, offering religious and symbolic capital justifications for it:

> …for we are believers in righteousness; we speak in its defence and sacrifice in its quest until martyrdom… our deeds were… meant for the revival of virtue, the abolition of falsehood, the defence of your oppressed followers, the upholding of justice on your land and an appeal to your (God's) approval and nearness. For this our martyrs have died, and for this we continue to strive. You have promised us one of the two better goals or rewards (*husnayayyn*): either victory or the honour of encountering you through martyrdom.[21]

In short, Hizballah's religious ideology stresses that martyrdom is a voluntary-willed act of self-sacrifice that is religiously sanctioned, and thus diametrically opposed to suicide, which is completely prohibited in Islam, the punishment being eternal damnation in hell. In other words, Hizballah's religious ideology regards self-sacrifice conducted on the basis of smaller military jihad as legitimate martyrdom operations, rather than suicide. However, Hizballah clarifies that if a person blows himself up without securing a prior authorization from the religious scholars (ulema), then his act amounts to suicide.

1.5 Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers

Khosrokhavar argues that the thematic of the discourses of Lebanese martyrs, both secular and religious, are similar to the Iranian Shi'ite martyrs and Sunni Palestinian martyrs' discourses. The similarity is that all believe in the same values of combating the enemy through martyrdom, martyrdom that originates from a will to die and a desire of immortality (Khosrokhavar 2002, 331). Lewis adds,

> Suicide bombing is by definition an organizational phenomenon. The legitimacy that makes the self-sacrifice of the individual admirable

and acceptable to the community derives paradoxically from the individual's stated commitment to comrades, cause, and society, a decision that must be made free of organizational coercion. Leaders who seek to deploy suicide attackers must therefore minimize the rather significant role that they play in selecting and preparing suicide attackers to prevent themselves from being seen as cynical manipulators of human lives. Their task is made easier when a culture that devalues individual lives relative to the good of the community is firmly entrenched or when extreme need makes suicide bombing appear as a necessary force equalizer. Among Palestinian Islamists in the 1990s, the first factor was present, making the sustained use of suicide bombing possible. By the new millennium, the second factor, military need, was present as well, leading to an exceptional increase in the number of suicide attacks carried out against Israeli targets (Lewis 2012, 140-1).

In this section, I only refer to two of the eight Palestinian females who blew themselves up in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: an attorney and a mother. Then, I compare Shaykh Yasin's justification of the self-sacrifice of female suicide bombers to that of Ayatullah Fadlallah's.

In her study on Palestinian women suicide bombers, Barbara Victor contends that the main motive for this "fatal cocktail" is that a "culture of death" entered into the psyche of the Palestinian people as a result of hopelessness, social stress, and depression, which these relatively destitute women suffered from (Victor 2003).[22]

A survey conducted by Reuters on the Palestinian reaction towards suicide operations conveyed that 75 percent of the Palestinians supported the October 4, 2003 suicide operation, the sixth operation conducted by a Palestinian woman since the beginning of the second intifada (Uprising).[23] The operation was carried out by attorney Hanadi Jaradat who blew herself up killing twenty Israeli civilians in the wake of the celebration of *Yum Kippur* (Day of Forgiveness) in Haifa, a city that is supposed to portray Israeli-Palestinian peaceful coexistence (Lankfor 2013, 60, 95, 197, 288). The sample included 1,318 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, out of whom 17 percent were against the operation, and 4.4 percent vehemently condemned it.[24] The late Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, founder of Hamas, argued, 'I'm saying that in this phase intifada, the participation of women is not needed, like men. We can't meet the growing demands of young men who wish to carry out martyrdom operations'.[25] On January 14, 2004, at the Erez crossing in Gaza, Reem

Saleh Al-Riyashi, the seventh woman suicide bomber and the first Palestinian mother,[26] detonated herself amongst Israeli soldiers, killing four and wounding seven.[27] In laying Reem to rest, Mahmoud Al-Zahhar, a Hamas political leader, declared, 'The martyr Reem is a heroine since she gave up everything. This was a young married woman who left behind a husband and children to go to *paradise*... She won't be our last'.[28] Although Shaykh Yasin earlier argued that it is not essential for women to participate in martyrdom operations, in spite of the growing number of male contenders, it seems he revoked his decision later on due to alterations dictated on the battlefield. In commenting on Al-Riyashi's operation, he said, 'The operation is a watershed operation on two counts: first, because a woman executed it;[29] second because it resulted from a joint endeavor between *Kata'ib Shuhada' al-Aqsa*[30], and *Kata'ib Izzeddine Al-Qassam*'[31]. Yasin added that Hamas refuses any cease-fire with Israel because this is tantamount to capitulation. Yasin affirmed, "Hence, everyone knows that there is no road and no other choice save the road of resistance."[32] In justifying women's role in jihad and martyrdom, Yasin argued that when the enemy [Israel] occupied the land of the Muslims [Palestine], jihad became a religious duty incumbent upon all Muslims, men and women. He reiterated,

> We used to say in the past that we leave women aside unless there is an urgent need for them to conduct martyrdom operations. Thus, when our brothers in the *Kata'ib* found the need to conduct an operation by resorting to a woman, they did so because, in my opinion, it is a new beginning for the woman. However, concerning jihad, it is not the beginning, rather the continuity of the path to martyrdom and struggle in the way of God by recourse to both men and women.[33]

The late Lebanese Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah (1935 - 2010) – the highest-ranking Shi'ite religious authority (*marja'*) in Lebanon – argued that a person must face power with equal or superior power. If it is legitimate to protect one's life, land, and destiny, then all means of self-defence become legitimate (1985).[34] Ayatullah Fadlallah argued that 'Suicide attacks in occupied Palestine [Israel] are not the craven acts of the morally depraved as they are portrayed by Western Media, but a form of legitimate resistance amid escalating dangers'. He added, ' "If achieving victory means that we have to go through a minefield, which necessarily and definitely means that many are going to be killed, then we would go". Fadlallah said that the Palestinian suicide bombers aim to defend their people by inflicting damage and losses on the Israeli side to maintain a

kind of equilibrium with the high-tech arsenal used by the Israeli Army' (Mousawi 2002). Fadlallah issued a fatwa sanctioning the martyrdom ("self-sacrifice") operations of Palestinian women, which is revolutionary because in Islam jihad is not incumbent upon women.[35]

> Fadlallah also contradicted views widely held by Islamic scholars on the role of women in jihad, saying women are allowed to participate and carry out "self-sacrifice"' operations. 'Nothing in Islam prevents women from embracing struggle and fighting for the sake of Allah. Women initially are not required to fight, for this is men's duty, but under certain circumstances [in the "Occupied Territories"] it might be a woman's duty as well' (Mousawi 2002).

There seems to be an organizational-causal link between Hizballah and the Palestinian resistance. Conceptualizing the above narration, Lewis aptly argues,

> Palestinian militants decided to use suicide bombing on a regular basis in late 1993 to undermine the peace process and differentiate themselves from their rivals. They… integrated their practical knowledge with the managerial techniques already developed by Hizballah. Suicide bombing became sustainable when a significant percentage of Palestinian society came to accept it as a legitimate means of resistance and political mobilization… leaders deliberately shifted cultural and organizational parameters to felicitate the emergence of a culture of martyrdom, which in turn facilitated the introduction of suicide bombing… It was a hybrid that resembled Hizballah's suicide bombing in some respects and in others demonstrated considerable originality…. (Lewis 2012, 161).

Khosrokhavar adds: 'For the Shi'ites it is God's encounter that is realized by combating an infidel enemy. For the nationalists and the communists, immortality is achieved either by identification with the "collectivité nationale" or by identification with all the poor [deprived] in the world' (Khosrokhavar 2002, 331).

Vroom's argument provides the seemingly missing link between sections one and two: he adds the concept of nationalistic identity construction to that of symbolic capital. He writes,

> The lesser jihad is armed struggle for the sake of Islam and the greater jihad the struggle against oneself – as in the gospel the one who conquers himself is stronger than the one who occupies a city. Hezbollah [and the Palestinians] turned this around: whoever

conquers himself and empties himself can come so far that he can give his life on command in an attack on the enemy. The comparison with kamikaze pilots who through Zen meditation were emptied of their selves and gave their lives for Japan is interesting. Apparently, people find the meaning for their existence in sacrificing themselves for the nation or the national religion – that is also a form of finding one's identity (2007, 238).

With this smooth link, we move in the next section out of the Arab-Muslim Middle East to the Far East that is characterized by the same modus operandi (way of doing things) concerning female suicide bombers although their modus vivendi (way of life) is different.

Section II. A Campaign of Suicide Bombing: from the Middle East to the Far East

Hamden argues that martyrdom and suicide missions are often attributed to political and religious terrorists. These regard themselves as "freedom fighters" and feel they have a responsibility to uphold the "greater good" (honour and dignity, and by extension symbolic capital) of their community since they are usually driven by ethno-geographic, nationalistic concerns. However, they have unrealistic goals and cannot be negotiated with since they are adamant in liberating the land of their forefathers and want to rule by their opaque ideological systems (2006, 165-178).

There are "nationalistic" types of martyrdom that have little, or, even nothing, to do with religion, but with the struggle for national independence. For example, the Chinese communists during the insurrection in Shanghai in 1927; the Japanese kamikaze or Tokkotai in World War II; the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka and India; the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey; Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) of India; and many others resorted to suicide operations (Gunaratna 2003, 220-225; Martin 2003, 131, 259-262; Alison 2009, 123-141, 162-185; Mazurana 2013, 146-168; Lewis 2012, 86-112, 135-140). While the Chinese and Japanese kamikazes were men, LTTE and PKK resorted to a good number of female suicide bombers. To my knowledge, the Chinese communists are Buddhists or Confucians; the Japanese kamikazes are Shinto and Buddhists; the LTTE is mainly composed of Hindus and a few Christians;[36] and the BKI are Sikh. Noteworthy, more than 4000 Japanese kamikazes (pilots and human torpedoes) committed suicide missions against the US forces in the Pacific: 'The motivating

factor in creating these special attacks units was the overwhelming disparity between the armed forces of Japan and those of the United States' (Lewis 2012, 59; 57-85), which is the same reasoning that was used by Hizballah and the Palestinians to justify their 'martyrdom' operations. It seems that the driving force behind the above mentioned groups is their ardent belief in ethno-nationalism, the defence of their country, or the liberation of their homeland.

'The LTTE has conducted one suicide operation in India. It is the only group to have killed two world leaders – the former prime minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi,[37] and the president of Sri Lanka, Ranasinghe Premadasa – using male and female suicide bombers' (Gunaratna 2003, 221). The recruitment of young females could also stem from practical reasons: '…the LTTE uses cute young girls that are less likely to look suspect; Palestinian Islamic Jihad often selects those who can pass for Israeli Jews' (Singer 2006, 115). In short, 'While the first wave of suicide attacks during the 1980s involved only five women, the LTTE and the PKK made the use of female bombers a norm during the 1990s, having incorporated them into 40 percent and 65 percent of their suicide operations, respectively' (Dolnik 2006, 166). Between 1980 and 2000, for instance, the LTTE conducted 168 suicide operations, while the PKK conducted 22 (Gunaratna 2003, 221), which is by far more than all the suicide operations conducted in Israel and Lebanon during the same period.

Noteworthy, it is estimated that at least 25% of the suicide bombers in that period were women (Bloom 2005). The estimates are on the rise: 'Women are sacrificial lambs in places like Turkey, were women comprised 40 percent of all suicide bombers in the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), Sri Lanka, where women exceed 25 percent of bombers in the LTTE, Chechnya, where they constitute 43 percent' (Bloom 2011, 137). Concerning estimates and percentages, the determination and success rates of the females seem to be higher than males: '…eleven out of the PKK's fifteen successful suicide bombings have been carried out by women' (Dolnik 2006, 159). Although this resolve was build over decades, initially the 'recruitment of young women was not on a voluntary basis. For example, the PKK's second suicide attack, which took place on October 25, 1996, was carried out by a woman named Leyla Kaplan, but she was not the first candidate considered for the mission. The first women chosen for the attack refused the mission. She was immediately executed in front of Kaplan' (Lewis 2012, 137-8). Contrary to Lewis's earlier analysis of Palestinian female suicide bombers, he stresses that '[t]he decision to force [PKK's] women to become suicide attackers limited the power of suicide bombing to serve as a means of individual empowerment and group solidarity' (Lewis 2012, 138). However, recent

developments seem to refute Lewis's theory revealing the voluntariness of the decision as well as women's power and empowerment of the whole community in the face of a ruthless enemy. In Kobani near Aleppo, Syria, female fighters of the People's Protection Unit (YPJ) fought to death, either by detonating or shooting themselves so as not to be defiled by the Islamic State's hardcore warriors. During the war of attrition (September 2014-January 2015) in Kobane the 'well-known Kurdish fighter, Arin Mirkan, blew herself up while being surrounded by advancing ISIS fighters...' (Cockburn 2015, 152). Noteworthy, ISIS fighters believe that if they were killed by a woman, then they would be defiled, consequently denied entry to "Heaven". Around 16 million Kurds are scattered among the nation states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Their dream is to found, to be united in the ethno-nationalist state of Kurdistan as 'the only answer to resolving their concerns and history of discrimination, abuse, and attempted genocide' by their host countries (Lewis 2012, 135), as such acting as "anti-destin" or hard-core altruists.

While in the Palestinian case the eight female suicide bombers were volunteers, in the LTTE case they were seasoned-professional fighters who were members of the 'permanently attached suicide squad called the Black Tigers, comprised of the most devoted and able volunteers selected out of the group's toughest combat units', who do not hesitate to swallow their potassium cyanide capsules in case of mission failure (Dolnik 2006, 163). Hamden concludes,

> Potential terrorist recruits typically need goals and purpose in their life; they seek a life of fairness, freedom of expression, economic security, and health. Terrorist groups can attract the recruit with financial security, while offering them the right to be heard and be treated with respect, as well as a heroic purpose for the common good of his and her people (2006, 177).

Conclusion

It might be argued that the process of thought illustrated by the aforementioned exposition is that suicide operations are exploited by Islamist movements' and nationalist's leaders to grant symbolic or religious capital to members and supporters who get killed in a political or military battle. Martyrdom – which is

extolled as a religious injunction or nationalistic duty – is used by them as an instrument of mobilization, especially when the recruits are promised the ticket to "Heaven"[38] or eternal rewards if they conduct self-sacrificial operations. This might explain why Islamist and nationalist movements consider martyrdom as the most extolled human sacrifice, while the international community regards it as terrorist-suicide attacks.

The Islamists' argument – that there is no distinction between dying while fighting in the battlefield and blowing oneself up – seems to have shattered the commonly held theological view that regards giving one's life for the faith to die as a "martyr" as not the same thing as blowing oneself up. However, the religious-ideological justifications of self-sacrifice and martyrdom do not rule out the political practicality of forcing the enemy to withdraw from occupied land and achieve victory, since this practicality is based upon, and sanctioned by religious-ideological grounds, which regard jihad as having two glorious fruits: martyrdom of the self and victory in battle, as mentioned in the Quran (9:52). This is a mark of the collective identity of self-sacrifice and "martyrdom" whereby the local community as well as the umma benefits and reaps the rewards of martyrdom.

I subscribe to the view that stresses the individually driven nature of suicide bombers arguing that they 'can be educated and uneducated; religious and secular; comfortably off and destitute; their link is the decision they make to transform their powerlessness into extraordinary power' (Reuter 2004).[39] In highlighting the long lineage between Islamic and ethno-national resistance, I have argued that martyrdom operations – whether carried out by Islamist or resistance movements – are altruistic, self-sacrificial operations conveyed in the form of symbolic capital (honour and dignity). This generalization seems to be warranted by a correspondence among the various discourses discussed above. I suggest that the common ground for both Islamist and nationalistic-secular movements is the agreement that living under occupation is tantamount to disgrace and humiliation. As such, it is respectively a religious and nationalistic duty to end the occupation using all possible means, including suicide operations.

In this article, I intended to express how both parties furnished a religious or secular political discourse to justify suicide operations. The icon that both parties, secularists and Islamists, embraced is that martyrdom operations were conducted in order to uphold the honour, pride, and dignity of the "nation"; this being the main cause or motivation behind self-sacrifice operations. This value-laden expression of symbolic capital connotes different meanings of the word "umma" to the various

adherents. Thus, for Hizballah and the Palestinians, the umma denotes the Islamic umma; for the SSNP the umma refers to the "Syrian Nation"; for the LCP the umma pinpoints to all the destitute, the deprived in the world; for the LTTE the umma corresponds to the Tamil nation; and for the PKK the umma refers to a free, united, and independent Kurdistan. The common denominator among all of these conceptions of nationhood or umma is that they are "imagined communities" (Anderson 2006). As such, there seem to be elements pointing to pedagogy of martyrdom, the common denominator of which are symbolic and religious capital, on the one hand, and agency, on the other. Agency is salient in the rule of thumb and the prima facie duty that the recourse to suicide operations contextual; i.e. it is dictated by the conditions of the battlefield where conventional weapons and capabilities prove futile or inadequate in facing a superior enemy that outguns and overpowers them. Moreover, the suicide bomber feels that S/he is in control since that person determines the time and place of the operation, as such exercising empowerment.

Note

1. Quran (4: 93): 'And he who kills a believer intentionally will, as punishment, be thrown into Hell, dwelling in it forever; and Allah will be angry with him, curse him and prepare for him a dreadful punishment'.

2. The Lebanese myriad or mosaic refers to the ethnic composition of the Lebanese communities, including the officially recognized eighteen sects or religious groups: 'Alawite, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic, Copts, Druze, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Isma'ili,

Jewish, Latin Catholic, Maronite, Protestant, Sunni, Shi'a, Syriac Catholic, and Syriac Orthodox.

3. Moreover, the party has its own women music band (*Firqat al-Wilaya al-Nisa'iyya*). Hizballah engages in gender mixing: its women play musical instruments, sing, and perform on stage with other men and children for the 'noble purpose' of revolutionary theatre as articulated by resistance art, within the domain of its jurisprudential stipulations – religious prohibitions (*al-mahazir al-shar'iyya*) and religious safeguards (*al-dawabit al-shar'iyya*) – which cater to Muslim religious sensibilities. See Joseph Alagha, 'Hizballah's De-radicalization through Performing Arts', *The Maghreb Review: A quarterly journal on the Maghreb, the Middle East, Africa and Islamic studies* 41.4 (2016): 544-558.

4. In line with the stipulations of the Ta'if Agreement that ended the Lebanese civil war and became Lebanon's new constitution in 1990, all militias were disbanded with the exception of the Islamic Resistance, Hizballah's military wing, because the Lebanese government classified it as a resistance movement. Thus, ever since 1990, Hizballah virtually monopolized the resistance against Israeli forces occupying southern Lebanon.

5. Hizballah's martyrs listed chronologically are the following: 1 Ahmad Qasir (11 November 1982); 2 'Ali Safiyyeddine (13 April 1983); 3 Ja'far Al-Tayyar (14 October 1983); 4 Aborted operation killing 2 Hizballahis (1983); 5 'Amer Kalakish (11 March 1988); 6 Haytham Dbuq (19 August 1988): 7 Abdallah 'Atwi (19 October 1988); 8 Shaykh As'ad Birru (9 August 1989); 9 Ibrahim Dahir (21 September 1992); 10 Salah Ghandur (25 April 1995); 11 'Ali Ashmar (20 March 1996); 12 'Ammar Husayn Hammud (30 December 1999). (Alagha 2013, 326).

6. Noteworthy, only Ahmad Qasir, the first Hizballah martyr, could satisfy the stipulation of a martyrdom operation, namely, killing more than thirty Israeli soldiers. Qasir detonated himself in the Israeli headquarters in Tyre, in southern Lebanon, killing around 76 military officers and wounding 20 others. Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister at the time, declared three-day mourning in Israel arguing that this was Israeli's worst calamity since its creation in 1948. In Qasir's honour, Hizballah celebrates annually "Martyrdom Day" on the eleventh of November (Mustapha 2003, 459-463).

7. In her farewell address, which Khosrokhavar quotes, Sana Muhaydli dedicated her martyrdom operation to the first SSNP martyr, Wajdi al-Sayegh (Khosrokhavar 2002, 330). One year before Hizballah standardized the practice of videotaping the martyrdom operations and the farewell addresses of the martyrs, the SSNP only videotaped the farewell addresses of the martyrs, starting with Sana.

8. *Al-Bina': Sabah Al-Khayr* 1039 (March 2001): 21-23.

9. SSNP martyrs listed chronologically are the following: 1 Wajdi Al-Sayegh (13 March 1985); 2 Sana Muhaydli (9 April 1985); 3 Malek Wehbeh (20 April 1985); 4 Khaled Al-Azraq (9 July 1985); 5 Ibtissam Harb (9 July 1985); 6 Ali Ghazi Talib (31 July 1985); 7 Mariam Kheireddine (11 September 1985); 8 Ammar al-Aʿsar (4 November 1985); 9 Muhammad Qanaʿa (10 July 1986); 10 Norma Abi Hassan (17 July 1986); 11 Zahr Abi ʿAssaf (18 June 1987): 12 Fadwa Hasan Ghanim 'Suryana' (25 November 1990). (Alagha 2013, 327). See also *Al-Bina': Sabah Al-Khayr* 1039 (March 2001): 21-23; http://www.ssnp.info/index.php?section=30&templ=5. Accessed July 28, 2015.

10. Khosrokhavar seems to contradict himself when he mentions that the LCP martyrs, Lola Abboud and Jamal al-Sati (a Christian female and a Muslim male) came from the *Biqaʿ* (2002, 229). Jamal al-Sati blew himself up on August 6, 1985 in the Israeli Military Governor's residence in *Zaghleh*. For an overview of the LCP operations against the Israeli forces (Mustapha 2003, 345-349).

11. Interview with Elie Saadeh, an SSNP middle-rank cadre, November 29, 2003.

12. SSNP believes in Syrian nationalism, opting to form a "Syrian Nation" in "Natural Syria", which comprises the following present-day countries: Lebanon, Syria, Palestine [Israel], Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Sinai in Egypt, Cyprus, and southern parts of Turkey. Antoun Saadeh, the Lebanese Christian founder of the secular SSNP formed a brigade to fight Israel, and, in 1949, the Lebanese state executed him by a firing squad (Yamak 1966).

13. This explains why SSNP, unlike Hizballah, sent martyrs to conduct martyrdom operations in Israel.

14. After 23 years, Israel returned her remains – along with the remains of 187 Lebanese, Palestinian, and Arab fighters – on 16 July 2008 in a groundbreaking prisoner swap with Hizballah. Her mother – Fatima or Umm Haytham – was very happy to finally bury her. See *al-Safir* (25 July 2008). The swap included the notorious Samir al-Quntar – who served 29 years in prison out of a life sentence – and the four Hizballah fighters who were kidnapped by Israel during the July 2006 war: Khudr Zaydan, Maher Kawtharani, Husayn Sulayman, and Muhammad Srur. With this swap, Israel aimed at closing this contentious file with Lebanon. Noteworthy, Samir al-Quntar – 'the dean of Arab detainees' as Hizballah labels him – was killed in Damascus, Syria on December 19, 2015.

15. Noteworthy, Jaber mistakenly labels Sana Muhaydli as a Sunni, so do the rest of the authors mentioned above, who apparently followed her lead. The truth of the matter is that she is a Shiʿite from *'Anqun*, which is fourteen kilometres away from Sidon, south Lebanon.

16. July 2, 1988. Noteworthy, in recognition of Sana's "great feat", her family was given residency and work in Libya by the late Muʻammar al-Qadhaffi.

17. This bears a sticking resemblance to Dr Abboud's remark that, 'each of us is free to worship God the way he wishes, but we are not free to treat our country any way we want'. Dr Abboud is the brother of Lola Abboud (Davis 2003, 83).

18. Her mother acknowledged that Lola was 'a religious girl, who used to attend church, pray and light candles for the Lebanese soldiers fighting Israelis' (Davis 2003, 76).

19. In its war of attrition against the Israeli forces occupying southern Lebanon, Hizballah conducted twelve martyrdom operations by males targeting only Israeli military and intelligence personnel occupying south Lebanon. (Fadlallah 2001, 233).

20. This trait is attributed to Imams Husayn and ʻAli.

21. The word *husnayayn* in verse (9:52) is taken to refer to martyrdom (of the self) and victory (for the umma): "Say: 'Do you expect for us anything other than one of the two fairest outcomes (martyrdom and victory); while we expect that Allah will smite you with a punishment, either from Him, or at our hands?' So wait and watch, we are waiting and watching you" (Alagha 2013, 50).

22. See also 'Equality in death – Barbara Victor lifts the veil on the world of the women suicide bombers'. *The Observer*, April 25, 2004. http://observer.guardian.co.uk/magazine/story/0,11913,1200794,00.html. Accessed on the same day.

23. December 1987 marked the beginning of the first Palestinian "stones" intifada (popular uprising). On 28 September 2000, the second Palestinian "*Al-Aqsa*" intifada erupted in the wake of the late PM Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount (*al-Masjid al-Aqsa*). Both were bloody; characterized by suicide operations against Israeli soldiers and civilians. The third intifada erupted in October 2015 over restrictions to entering *al-Aqsa* and movement in the West Bank. It was characterized by the stabbing of and driving over Israeli soldiers and civilians.

24. "Majority of the Palestinians Support Martyrdom Operations." *Al-Safir*, October 20, 2003.

25. *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, February 2, 2002, as cited by (Davis 2003, 79).

26. She had a son and a daughter: ʻAbida, 3 years old, and Duha, 18 months. Reem Al-Riyashi originated from a wealthy family who owns a battery factory. See Al-Masri, Salih. 2004. "Reem Al-Riyashi: An ideal wife and a mother who adores her children." *Al-Intiqad* 1041, January 23. See also (Lankfor 2013, 59, 179).

27. See Lebanese daily newspapers of January 15, 2004. For more background see (Khalili 2007; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2009; el-Haddad 2015).

28. "Israel Seals off Gaza Strip after Hamas Suicide Attack." *AFP*, January 15, 2004.

29. First woman from Hamas to conduct such an operation.

30. The secularist Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, which is an offshoot of the late Yaser Arafat's *Fatah* (wing of the PLO).

31. The military wing of Hamas.

32. *Al-Manar* 7:30 pm News, January 14, 2004.

33. *Al-Nour* 6:00 GMT News, January 20, 2004. See also Imad 'Id. 2004. 'Shaykh Ahmad Yasin in a special dialogue with *Al-Intiqad*: The Palestinian woman was in the army of substitutes and its role has come'. *Al-Intiqad* 1041, January 23. Shaykh Yasin made the analogy between prayer and *jihad* as two religious duties binding for both genders (Schweitzer 2003). See also chapter four entitled "Women as Suicide Bombers" in (Cragin and Daly 2009, 55-69). See also (Hasso 2005).

34. Unlike classical Muslim scholars, in this instance, Fadlallah broadens the mandate of the purposes of the *Shari'ah* (*maqasid al-Shari'ah*) to sanction martyrdom. *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* include the protection of reason (*hifz al-'aql*); the protection of the self (*hifz al-nafs*); the protection of family and descent (*hifz al-nasl*); the protection of religion (*hifz al-din*); and the protection of property (*hifz al-mal*).

35. *Al-Safir*, April 2, 2002. Cf. Saad-Ghorayeb's contention that "Fadlu'llah never did issue a *fatwa* in support of the martyrdom operation…" (2001, 132).

36. For instance, Anton Balasingham (1938-2006) was one of the LTTE Christian leaders.

37. The act was conducted by a Tamil girl named Thenmozhi Rajaratnam (Dhanu) on May 21, 1991. She was gang-raped by Indian soldiers and her four brothers died during the Sri Lankan civil war (Martin 2003, 131; Cohn 2013, 159; Lankfor 2013, 60).

38. Symbolic capital as *jihad* and martyrdom.

39. See also 'Shireen and Others Like Her' *The Economist*, May 22, 2004, 88-89.

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Teaching Globalization Globally
The experience of Globalization, Social Justice and Human Rights Course

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Abstract

The changes introduced by the growing global connectivity represent a challenge for education systems – in particular for universities. To be in tune with the necessity of a global society, university teaching needs to transmit on to students not only contents but also the capacity to think globally, overcoming a nationalistic nation-focused perspective. In order to promote the creation of world citizens, universities have to improve students' capacity to work in cross-cultural virtual teams. The paper aims to present the seven-year experience of teaching a course on *Globalization, Social Justice, and Human Rights* across international and cultural boundaries.In particular, we describe the ways in which the course attempts to go beyond the mere

acquisition of new content and towards promoting dialogue among people with different languages, experiences, university backgrounds, and expectations. The paper ends with a critical assessment of our experience where we discuss the advantages and challenges that students and faculty faced.

Keywords: Globalization; Critical thinking (skill); Diversity; Active learning; Human rights.

Teaching Globalization Globally

The awareness of the world beyond national borders has become a necessary skill for students to succeed in a globalized world, characterized by an increased economic, political and cultural interconnectivity. Universities are increasingly called to prepare their students for a more interdependent world (Sohoni and Petrovic 2010) by promoting students' understanding of the complex dynamics and interconnections that have enabled the world to emerge as a global space. The increasing calls for 'internationalizing' the curricula cannot be restricted to adding some bits of international data and material to an essentially nation-centered curriculum; instead, it requires the direct experience of «working in geographically distributed, cross-cultural virtual teams, with team members who are in multiple time zones, countries, and culture and who work in multiple languages» (Cogburn and Levinson 2008, p. 75). A globalized world calls for 'ways of teaching' that instill content, as well as social consciousness (Dukes et al. 2016); ways of teaching that promote the capacity to learn, recognize and manage cultural difference, and find complex answers and solutions to complex questions and problems. The 'globalization' of the curricula constitutes a specific challenge for the social sciences. Teaching globalization adopting a truly global perspective requires the capacity to develop an appropriate set of concepts, a reflexive approach, and an awareness of how social location (Anthias 2013) affects our experiences and understanding of the world. It also requires a new pedagogical approach; an approach focused on exposing students to the capacity/necessity to face the hyper-diversity (Tasan-Kok et al.2013) that characterizes their everyday experiences.

This paper aims to present the seven-year experience of teaching a course on *Globalization, Social Justice, and Human Rights* across international and cultural boundaries[1].We start with a brief discussion of how current global processes are

affecting the way in which we understand social reality, undermining large part of the conceptual tools we inherited from the classical Western social sciences and showing the limitations of nationally-centered perspectives. We explore how globalization affects youth experiences and how innovative ways of teaching can promote the development of new skills and knowledge that prepare students to be global citizens. We then explain why the themes of human rights and social justice represent the most appropriate entry point for learning about the subject of globalization in a way where the latter is reflected in the content as well as teaching methodology. Following this, the paper describes the objectives and structure of the course. In particular, we describe the ways in which the course attempts to go beyond the mere acquisition of new content and towards promoting dialogue among people with different languages, experiences, university backgrounds, and expectations. The paper ends with a critical assessment of our experience where we discuss the advantages and challenges that students and faculty faced.

Growing up a Globalized World

In 1999, John Tomlinson introduced the term 'complex connectivity' to refer to the cultural dimensions of the current globalization processes, and specifically to «the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life» (p. 2). The term helps to highlight the fact that people's experiences are 'more connected' because their lives are increasingly affected by facts, decisions, news and commodities that originate in places far away from their context of physical location. Young people, in particular, may be growing up in contexts in which it is more and more important to become aware of the influence that global events have on local life and, vice versa, how local action may affect the life of other people in other parts of the planet. Young people are included in global fluxes of images, ideas, ideals, goods, services and information and are involved in relationships in which being able to recognise, manage and value personal and collective difference is a necessary expertise for not being excluded or marginalized. Therefore, bilingualism, the ability to rely on different cultural references, a certain relativism in the conception of the rules, adaptability and flexibility seem to constitute fundamental skills that every young person must have to succeed in an increasingly global world. This is not a simple 'accumulative' competence: fitting into different contexts involves the ability to 'adapt', to 'translate', to 'mediate' what is or has been learned in one context to different contexts (Purkayastha 2005).In recent years, many scholars have suggested

that current societies are increasingly characterized by super- (Vertovec 2007) or hyper-diversity (Tasan-Koket al. 2013). The terms aim to underline a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything previously experienced in western society. It signals that everyday reality has become increasingly characterized by the proliferation and mutually conditioning effects of a number of significant diversities that go beyond the classical economic, social, cultural and demographic diversities to include lifestyles, attitudes, activities, skills, and formal statuses.In this scenario, young people are keen (and are required) to develop a different, more fluid and contextualized conception of belonging, identification and citizenship (Appadurai 1996; Taylor 1992; Yuval-Davis 2011). Imagination and the opportunity to navigate through plural cultural fragments are becoming typical features of the present generational experience (Massey 1994; Zukin, 2010), promoting new skills and highlighting new opportunities as well as new constraints.

Knowing how to move between different contexts, showing high levels of flexibility (Visser et al. 2014), and adapting what is learned in one place to the needs and expectations of another, constitute the special skills of the new generations. The imperatives of 'holding together', continuously adapt and translate, deal with the unavoidable dose of uncertainty (Urry 2003), and be able to play up their abilities according to the constraints and expectations of the contexts, all characterize the common background in which contemporary young people are to act.We can suppose that young people are experiencing more acutely, the need to know how to deal with a world ever more complex, changeable and intertwined. They are summoned daily to cope with patterns of consumption, information, and the construction of identity that circulate in global flows rather than arising, as usually happened in the past, from the material resources and relationships available in the local context.

Considering young people as part of a new generation does not mean erasing internal differences. The label 'young people' hardly refers to a homogeneous category: the intersection between gender, race, class, sexuality, education, ethnicity, religion, family background, dis/ability, and spatial location continues to play a decisive role in defining openings and closings and to set the space for agency. It is part of a responsible and effective educational project to encourage the achievement of the skills necessary to understand the global world through an explicit recognition of the diversities of the students' social location and promoting awareness of the complexity and diversity of human experiences.

Besides the availability of adequate economic and technological resources, the capacity to deal with the complexity of their everyday experiences requires the development of specific skills that are mainly based on the ability to access and manage the symbolic codes used and valued in different situations, and to move from one context to another. It becomes important to develop the ability to adapt to diverse relational contexts, characterized by different rules, languages, audiences and interests. Social sciences play an important role here. The capacity/necessity to achieve the skills necessary to live in a global context includes, first of all, acquiring the appropriate set of conceptual tools and practical experiences for understanding the complexity and variability of the diverse situations in which the subject has to act. Words, ideas, theory and methods elaborated by classical social sciences seem not enough to completely grasp the 'complex interconnectivity' of the globalized world. Changes produced by globalization processes have put under critical scrutiny the social sciences and have increased the necessity to revise their epistemological, theoretical and methodological assumptions (Bhambra 2014; Bhambra and de Sousa Santos 2017; Burawoy 2016; Chakrabarty 2000). Under the challenge of understanding globalization, current social sciences often reveal their provinciality and require a critical reconsideration of the conditions of their foundation. An attempt to transcend the provinciality of conventional social sciences and make them more appropriate for a global setting goes through the effort to include the concerns, languages, categories, experiences and practices coming from non-western traditions and histories (de Sousa Santos 2014). In particular, the necessity to overcome rigid forms of methodological nationalism has been widely debated in social sciences in the last years (Beck 2000; Chernillo 2011; Wimmer and Schiller 2002). In order to fully understand globalization, social sciences should rid of the bias of considering the nation state unit as the key-order to study social, economic, cultural and political processes. To facilitate better sociological accounts of global societies, social sciences need not only to introduce in their analysis transnational data and comparisons, but also to recognize the complexity of the current world. This means accepting that the conceptual tools built within the western theoretical and methodological framework are limited and inadequate, and that «the world around us is so complex in its operations that it is simply not 'knowable' through any single concept or even existing sociological categories, such is the fluidity and inter-relationship between the processes we commonly call 'globalization'» (Munck 2016, p. 242). This means recognizing the need to enrich the social sciences' tool-kit with concepts and point of views coming from histories and experiences different from the western tradition. A better sociological account of globalization

requires the developing of 'connected sociologies' (Bhambra 2014) that recognize «the historical connections generated by processes of colonialism, enslavement, dispossession and appropriation, that were previously elided in mainstream sociology» (Bhambra and de Sousa Santos 2017, p. 6).

The required enlargement of sociological horizon, necessary to recognize the uncertainties and complexities of the global world, also involves the necessity to rethink how social sciences are taught and how teachers transmit the body of knowledge needed to deal with a global world.

Globalization and teaching

The changes induced by the growing global connectivity represent a challenge for education systems – in particular for universities. On one hand, universities are called to foster 'internationalization' in order to prepare students for a neo-liberal market and knowledge economies that need individuals who can use knowledge, know how to adapt to new situations, recognise and manage cultural diversity, and are curious and ready to explore the unknown (Sahlberg 2004; Stromquist 2007). On the other hand, 'internationalization' is a way to respond to the increasingly diverse, multicultural, and international composition of the student body. Western universities are constantly pressed to increase their level of internationalization, and funding is increasingly tied to their capacity to attract foreign students. This is a sign of how globalization changes universities and their vocation: they no longer educate only national elites but struggle for the recruitment of international students (Shin 2011).

Globalization calls on universities to revise and strengthen their social tasks, too. New global realities require, as Fujikane (2003, p. 145) observes, the «creation of new world citizens with proper knowledge of, skill for, and disposition applicable to the globalized world». To be in tune with the necessity of a global society, university teaching needs to transmit on to students not only contents but also the capacity to think globally, overcoming a nationalistic nation-focused perspective. In order to promote the creation of world citizens, universities have to overcome the students' lack of exposure to and knowledge of other-countries' contexts (especially non-Western contexts). Assuming a truly, complex and open to change global perspective is a viable and valuable tool not only in learning about the world but also in recognizing, analysing, and correcting inevitable local biases (Sohoni and Petrovic 2010, p. 291). Exposing students to the complexity of a global world implies pushing students to reflexively consider their (social) location and how it

informs what and how they know. Avoiding a sterile criticism of their biases, students are encouraged to gain and promote a mature awareness of the partiality of any interpretation and, at the same time, the unavoidability to interpret the situation starting from one's own location.

Globalization represents an open challenge for university teaching. On the one hand, we are witnessing a growing trend towards the standardization of teaching and curricula. From above, governments push universities to adoptperformance standards for students and teachers, and indicators that help to assess the achievement of these standards. Closely scripted curricula with predetermined attainment targets or learning standards are implemented as a way to (objectively) assess the performances of both students and teachers. As a result, as Sahlberg(2004, p. 76) notes, «many school systems and particularly their secondary schools have become rational, factory-type institutions that impose standardized knowledge on students rather than promote curiosity, creativity and self-actualization". On the other hand, promoting critical thinking, awareness of the complexity, and the capacity to perform elaborate analyses and practices to face the variability and interconnectedness of social reality, become an unavoidable task for universities. In order to face the challenges of understanding and tackling the problems of environment pollution, migration and multiculturalism, growing inequalities, terrorism, and implementation and respect of human rights – to name a few – it is necessary for students to develop an awareness of the world beyond the national borders and beyond their taken-for-granted categories. Grasping the mutual, albeit multifaceted, pattern of interaction between global forces and local conditions (Shin 2011, p. 39) is a crucial step in promoting the capacity to think out-of-the-box and to face complexity and uncertainty.

The experience of our course goes in this last direction. We did not attempt to teach a global sociology – if this means a unified model of sociology for understanding the world society (a project that has been criticised as an element of a Western-centric hegemonic ambition) (Martin and Beittel 1998). Instead, we enable students to face the complexity, variety and – to some degree – contradictions that inevitably characterise the theoretical and methodological tool-kit necessary to interpret a complex world. Our goal is to stimulate students to learn how to face ambivalence, how to translate between different languages, concepts and points of view, how to shift, move and negotiate the uncertainties and complexity of the contemporary condition, and how to discuss and work with who may have different ideas, ideals, goals and interests.

Our Globalization, Social Justice and Human Right Course: Objectives and Methodology

Teaching should be a humanizing experience for both educators and students. Our course *Globalization, Social Justice and Human Rights* represents the collective effort of academics who see pedagogy as a tool for bringing about social change; as part of a lifelong mission of eliminating various forms of oppression and constructing a world based on respect for human rights and dignity. The course has become an infrastructure of empowerment not only for the students but for the faculty as well. Any form of empowerment begins with an understanding of the structural causes of oppression and an awareness of one's role as an agent of change. In his famous work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970), demonstrates that the goal of the liberatory model of education is not only to help students acquire knowledge, but more importantly to encourage them to develop an awareness of their capacity to transform the world. Today our world is facing many challenges of unprecedented proportions – the two major ones being social inequality and environmental destruction and unsustainability (Sklair 2016), thus the themes of human rights and social justice are more relevant than ever. At the same time, equipping students with the means to face and address these challenges becomes a necessity if we believe in the transformative capacity of education.

Crucial to understanding human experience in our contemporary world is a recognition of the global dimensions of economic, political, and cultural processes. While the course is interdisciplinary in nature (since it is being taught across different disciplines at the participating universities), the idea of global sociology captures particularly well the essence of the underlying philosophy and methodology employed by our course. It is necessary to note here that global sociology is not about universalization or the imposition of theories derived from the experiences of the North / West onto other parts of the world. On the contrary, according to Behbehanian and Burawoy (2011), global sociology is the culminating phase of a reaction against universal sociology. Global sociology is first and foremost about globalizing the 'sociological imagination'. The idea of the interrelatedness between the micro and the macro or individual and society evolves into the interrelatedness between the local and the global. This means that students do not merely learn about other countries as if these were disconnected static entities. Instead, they are encouraged to critically think about the historical interconnectedness among different parts of the world by looking at: a) historical predecessors of globalization, such as colonialism and its legacies as manifested in

the realities of oppression today; and b) present-day trans-societal dynamics and 'relationality' that exists above the level of any particular society including processes, phenomena, organizations, and movements that transcend national borders. Examples of these include migration, free-trade agreements, global production chains, land-grabbing, resource extraction, and social movements. Thus, to globalize the sociological imagination it is imperative to grasp the ways transnational forces interact with specific localities – including structures, processes, culture and social actors – as they are being facilitated, sustained, or contested by the latter. In this context, students can appreciate what global interrelatedness is, by realizing that you cannot fully understand the experiences of people in one part of the world without looking at the transnational connections that make this possible. For example, the unemployment experienced by a North American worker due to the outsourcing of production is made possible by the fact that there are masses of people desperate for a job willing to work at extremely low wages in a country in the Global South, which in turn has been made possible by the dispossession of small-scale farmers from their land by a North American mining company operating in that country. The second element of global sociology has to do with developing a reflexivity about the possibility of building a global civil society and the agents that promote or obstruct this process. Adopting such a relational method of critical thinking, students can question common-sense superficial explanations of social reality. Here we consider forces that promote transnational solidarity and alliances among popular movements as well as those that weaken or erode them, such as repression, consumerism, austerity, and the restructuring of workplaces among others.

A close analysis of human rights and social justice is a good starting point for understanding globalization. These two concepts are first explored from a critical perspective, expecting students to understand the debates regarding the universality of human rights and explore the multiple understandings of what constitutes social justice. Students come to recognize that human rights is an open idea, with an open agenda, and a goal to be achieved but not limited to a single solution. Exploring the different interpretations of social justice also creates a space for thinking, knowing, debating, and deconstructing the doctrinal and common sense understandings of justice and rights. Students also explore specific lived experiences where violations of human rights take place and where social injustice prevails. This offers a clearer picture of the linkages between local conditions and global structures; such that students come to recognize the existence of globalizations (Ritzer 2015) and their relationship to social justice and human rights (Edwards and Usher 2000).

How does the philosophy of global sociology translate into our teaching practice through the course? The central feature of our teaching approach is that it is centred on collective learning. The course exists in the form of a community of learners. The foundation for such a community is a true dialogue - a horizontal relationship where everyone's presence is recognized and respected and where sharing, and not competition, is encouraged. Most of the student interaction in the course is directed by the students since the topics of discussion come from them in the form of blogs and responses to the blogs. Instead of students being always consumers of knowledge, they get to be creators of knowledge in the sense that they have an international audience of readers who respond to their writing. Having such a decentralized discussion allows students to feel that their knowledge and experiences are validated. It also enables them to bring in issues from their realities into the classroom (including the virtual discussion space) and take what they learn from that space to the outside world. The transnational interaction and collective work allows us to teach globalization not only through the content and methods we choose but also through the opening up of new ways of knowing and new spaces for learning. Through the discussions students learn to handle the ambivalence, uncertainties, complexities, and contradictions that surround issues pertaining to human rights and social justice. The sharing, tolerance of diverse viewpoints, and collaboration are further reinforced and culminate in the final group project (discussed further below).

Course Organization and Components

This general framework is the basis upon which the syllabus is built. Participating faculty collaborate during the summer to specify the core assigned readings for each class meeting. We seek to identify relevant works that are readily available in electronic form so that they are accessible to all students. This shared core is very minimal, so as to leave sufficient space for each participating faculty to assign additional readings that meet their course's specific topic. Through this collaboration, faculty are able to develop a class plan that does not standardize the course, but rather privileges plurality and diversity. All participants have half of class time done in-class/in-person and the other half of class time is dedicated for on-line communication and learning. The lingua franca is English. Both the process in creating the syllabus and the syllabus itself serve as models for the cross cultural, global collaboration skills we seek our students will gain. Through this experience we have learned about the importance of identifying a shared, core central

framework that serves as the backbone of the course, and yet to have the flexibility to adjust to our differences, accommodate to our different teaching approaches, and contribute equally to the sustenance of the global course.

Students are encouraged to communicate and collaborate in two ways. First, they communicate on a consistent basis through blogs. In their blogs, students are required to submit carefully crafted, critical analyses of the readings. In addition, they are required to offer thoughtful responses to other students' blogs. This way, they are able to engage in conversation regarding the course topics, sharing their views regarding the shared readings, but also expanding each other's horizons through information of the different works read in the various campuses and their lived experiences. In order to offer more concentrated engagement, each faculty selects one weekly featured blog from among their students. Students first engage in conversation through the featured blogs, and then engage the other students' blogs. Second, students are asked to participate in a group project. Students are randomly assigned to a workgroup, ascertaining that each group will have participants from other institutions. If necessary, students from the same institution may be paired, but not more than two from the same institution will be in any given work group. Faculty develop a list of approximately 20 questions from which each group can select the one question they seek to answer as a team. The team then collaborates in developing their response. The strongest essays are those where students collaborate on the conceptual framework of the answer; making the work truly collaborative, rather than simply cooperative. Once this conceptual framework is achieved, they divide the work evenly, each doing a section of the full answer. This is a rather challenging exercise, as students must only learn to not only collaborate regarding the content of the answer to the question, but also in regards to the different levels of engagement, their different time zones, and the different end dates for their courses.

Communication and collaboration is done through NING, a platform designed to create social networks and which facilitates project collaboration for people from different institutions. Although this platform allows for the creation of smaller workgroups, for their group projects, students tend to use e-mail and Facebook. In some instances, students have been able to hold face-to-face or voice communications online.

Global dialogue is facilitated by the existence of a central framework in the course that is paired with flexibility, as well as the use of electronic technology. We are able to encourage reflexive, elaborate analyses and critical thinking, awareness

of the complexity of globalization and its relationship to social justice and human rights. Through their interactions students learn to face ambivalence; to translate between different languages, cultures, concepts and points of view; and to converse and work with people from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews.

Assessment of our Experience: Achievements, Challenges, and Limitations

One of the main aims of our course is to prepare an increasingly diverse student population to participate, in proactive ways, in a globalized, networked world (Stornaiuolo 2016). After eight years of teaching experience, we can try to assess whether and to what extent we have been able to achieve such a goal. Our students' feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Although we have yet to create common tools for cross-class, longitudinal assessments, we have relied on students' qualitative and quantitative evaluations, required by teachers or universities at the end of the courses. One of the points consistently made by students demonstrates the value (and difficulties) of 'working together in diversity'. They prize the opportunity to discuss topics concerning social justice, human rights and globalization, with students from other national and cultural backgrounds, using social media that best represent their contemporary world. They appreciate most the chance to express their own point of view to an international audience in an interactive fashion that allows for back-and-forth exchanges of opinions. Through this exercise, students learned to defend and sometime to question their own arguments in the context of a public discussion, especially through the blog postings, which in the words of one student, made them feel that they had more visibility and importance. Another student commented that it made them take their work more seriously because it was no longer only the marks that mattered, but rather other's perception of their abilities. In other words, they attached more value to their work in the course because it received international exposure. This reflects well one element in the rationale behind the structure of the course, which is to allow students to be creators, rather than simply consumers of knowledge. Moreover, learning takes the form of multiple horizontal paths (learning through dialogue with their international peers) rather than vertically (learning from voices of authority such as professors and texts). In this process students learned to align their own understanding of the situation with other different, but equally viable, interpretations. Through the investigation of social justice and human rights from a

global perspective, students understand how different national and cultural groups interpret, influence and prioritize issues of rights, inclusion and exclusion.

One of the challenges we face stems from dealing with different academic schedules, time zones, course focus, different levels of our student bodies (undergraduate and graduate), and demands on students. Through the years we have learned to adjust our courses to match more closely with the programs in other institutions. For instance, those of us who begin in late August or early September may not start writing blogs until the end of September or early October, when participants from Europe begin their courses. Participants in Europe begin their group projects rather earlier in their program, so that they can be done by the time participants in North America finish their semesters in early December. Cross-institution communication is lighter at the start and end of the semester, as students and faculty must learn to be accepting of these shifts. Faculty members need to structure their course in a way where the shared readings on each topic are covered during the same week as all the partner universities. Considering that there is other content that is specific to the course at each location (i.e. is not shared), each faculty's design of their version of the course becomes an exercise in creativity in order to ensure that their syllabus matches the schedule of the partners, while meeting the learning objectives specific to their level, department, and institution.

Ensuring the successful completion of the group project has been a challenge for both students and faculty. Some students may choose to drop a course after the groups have been arranged. In some instances, groups need to be re-structured due to lack of effective communication or collaboration within them. Individual faculty members cannot exercise control over the group project dynamics the way they normally would when teaching a regular course, given that each group comprises students outside of their institution. This therefore poses the question of who exactly is in charge of what. Another potential problem arises when students attribute intra-group conflicts to the fact that their peers are from a different country and instead of making an effort to find solutions to the problems, they conclude that it is impossible because "*they* do things differently". This can be seen as a form of othering which goes exactly contrary to what the course aims to achieve. There are students who are not so willing to make an effort to overcome language and other logistic barriers. The different time zones and lack of face-to-face interaction sometimes become a justification for not taking responsibility for the quality of the final product. It also allows for students to feel more anonymous, less accountable and to diffuse the responsibility. The assessment of this collaborative component of the course can also be a bit complicated due to the fact it represents the joint work

of students coming from different academic levels and institutional expectations. These examples illustrate the importance of developing the capacity to be flexible and recognize the challenges of working globally in an effective manner.

Another current limitation of our course is that we lack an effective participation of faculty from 'non-western' universities. Until now, the core faculty partners came from Canada, Italy, Portugal, Russia, UK, and the United Sates. Including faculty from Africa, Asia, Middle-East and Latin America would surely enrich our pedagogical (and theoretical) proposal and would represent a relevant contribution to the variety of ideas, perspectives, expectations and experiences to which our students would be exposed and stimulated to take into consideration for enlarging their set of tools for interpreting globalization. We hope – and we are working in this direction – that more partners from all around the world will be interested in participating. Their participation would allow us and our students to further mature and strengthen the course creating a space for dialogue in which the complexity of current globalization can be better understood developing a wider and more differentiated set of concepts, ideas and interpretations.

Conclusion

The capacity to create laboratories in which scholars and students from very different social locations think and discuss globalization can constitute a significant way to overcome a too parochial and western-centric social science. A global course teaching globalization globally could be a suitable place in which to compare knowledge and experiences constructed within and through national perspective without reducing this comparison to a superficial agglomeration of national languages and perspectives. In order to represent a real space for dialogue and discussion, social sciences teaching globalization should preserve its critical gaze: rather than simply celebrating globalization as an unproblematic and egalitarian form of togetherness it should reflexively address issue of power and privilege, and should enhance awareness of the importance of personal social location. Rather than offer a summary, definitive and ill-posed answers, globalized social sciences are in a favorable position to promote new skills in tune with the complexity and changeability of the current social experience. Hyper-diverse contexts require the capacity to develop complex analysis and complex answers, to manage ambivalence and to translate from one symbolic system of reference to different ones, according to the diverse situations. Global social sciences are summoned to develop a more varied tool-kit in order to offer useful concepts for understanding the complex

connectivity that characterize the contemporary globalization processes. Such a varied tool-kit should include words and ideas form tradition other than the Western one as well as the critical instruments that have always characterized western social though and that are nowadays indispensable for addressing issues of power and privilege. In this way, global social sciences could serve as a catalyst for social change in order to promote (a globally shared idea of) social justice through the concrete enhancement of (a globally shared idea of) human rights. Globalizing our pedagogy can play a crucial a role in the achievement of this goal.

Note

1. The course was initially designed by Dr. Rodney D. Coates at Miami University, Ohio, US (cfr. Bell et al. 2015).

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Shiite/Iranian thought in the context of post-Revolutionary Iran

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Abstract

In this article, I would like to focus on two issues; the first issue is the epistemological distinction which I make between the concept of 'Secular' and the concept of 'Urf'; and the second question is the state of the Shiite/Iranian thought which, in the context of post-Revolutionary Iran, has been influenced by what I term as a Eurocentric as well as Catholic framework. It is my firm conviction that as long as the Shiite/Iranian thought does not re-turn to its fundamentals by employing the capacities of 'Urf-dimension', we would not find any solution for our contemporary cul-de-sacs. In other words, the realm of 'Urf' needs to be revisited beyond the Catholic binaries of sacred versus secular and the tyranny of Eurocentric form of modernity.

Key Words: Secular, Urf, Catholic Worldview, Islam, Shiism, Iran.

Introduction

How to understand the concept of *urf*? Is *urf* synonymous with the concept of *secular*? Is the division of reality into two domains of sacred and secular of universal significance or this division is deeply context-bounded? How can we conceptualize Islam in terms of metaphysicality without falling into categories of Christianity? Should we conceptualize the transcendent unity of religions in terms of Christian categories (Taylor, 2007) or this philosophical position is a matter of debate rather than bending categories of Islam into the Christian conceptual

framework? I think it is high time to distinguish between the meaning domains of *urf* and the meaning domains of *secular*. This distinction is not solely a matter of lexical niceties but it has metaphysical consequence which needs to be dwelled upon.

The Secular and the 'Urf'

One of the main arguments against the 'rule by religion' which is based on 'Hekmat' is that, this form of interpretation would lead us towards secularism and secularism, it is argued that it would lead us to the separation of politics and religion as well as church from the state. Before going any further, allow me to say few words on the concept of 'Hekmat' as this word has been translated into various terms in European languages such as 'Wisdom', 'Theosophy', 'Philosophy', and 'Islamic Philosophy'. Although Hekmat may have all these aspects within its gamut but it would be wrong to assume that the concept of Hekmat is equivalent to one of these renderings or all of them together. If I would put it bluntly, then I would argue that I do not take the word 'Hekmat' in none of the aforementioned senses as I discern in this concept a paradigmatic potency which should not be lost in translations. That's why I use the term in its pristine form and rather give my own interpretation than getting lost in translations. In my understanding, the concept of 'Hekmat' has been employed in two different fashions within the Islamic traditions and both of these connotations have been employed in the context of philosophizing on the questions of state, government and political body. One of the dominant forms of conceptualizing the concept of 'Hekmat' is the jurisprudential approach by jurists who argue that 'Hekmat' is related to 'Hukm' and this notion is interpreted in terms of 'coercion'. However it would be a mistake to take this dominant interpretation as the only valid form of conceptualizing 'Hukm' as the former could be understood in terms of 'Hekmat' in a non-coercive fashion. One of the perplexities which have confused the Iranian mind is not solely of politico-economic nature but the conceptual confusion which rules supreme. But before delineating the chaotic Iranian mentalité, I need to say few words about the concept of 'rule by religion' and 'Hekmat'. I know these concepts have other trajectories in the Western/Christian/Modern/Eurocentric traditions and if we do not dwell upon these different trajectories then we will fall in some kind of incommensurable state of debate and I deeply try to avoid this. When I employ the concept of 'rule by religion', I refer to the concept of 'Hakemiyat Din' and not the institutional notion of religious state or 'Hakemiyat Dini'. But in order to understand this conceptual frame

of reference we need to fathom the concept of 'Hakemiyat' which seems to be affiliated with another concept which I used earlier, i.e. 'Hekmat'. If you look at lexical translations you may find, as aforementioned, equivalents which do not render the conceptual accuracies which I am looking for in order to further my arguments. The word 'Hakemiyat' is translated into English as *sovereignty* which has jurisprudential connotations and historically related to state, government and political violence in the form of institutional implementation of coercion against the subjects and then citizens. I think there are aspects of 'Hakemiyat' within the Islamic tradition which shares this form of conceptualization but there is another way of understanding the concept of 'Hakemiyat', i.e. as related to 'Hukm' in terms of 'Hekmat'. Hukm in relation to Hekmat is an order which is not realized through coercion but springs out of affection, love and tenderness. To put it differently, order which springs out of Hekmat is different from the order which is generated by Hukumat. Although both are related to Hukm but in the first interpretation the order is of the nature of wisdom which one should go and seek but in the second form one should be subjected to the order by coercion. In other words, in the primary notion, one should be freely at the disposal of wisdom in order to transcend the boundaries of ignorance while in the other school, one should be subjected by coercion to the will of the sovereign whose will is the only legitimate rule. In the history of Islam, we can witness both forms but the examples left to us by the 'Shiite Imams' is the governing by love and kindness and the other one is associated by 'Islam of Khalifs'. Of course, in brief, it should be mentioned that in the modern context, it seems a dialectics has occurred whereby we can witness a form of shiitization of the Sunni mentalité and a sunnification of the Shiite mentalité. This, I shall not develop here as it has been discussed by Ernest Gellner in details.

Now allow me to go back to the question of secularism in the Iranian lebenswelt. The word 'secular' has been translated into different terms but the most common ones are 'Sekular' and 'Urfi'. But my contention is that these two concepts are not either synonymous or referring to similar meaning-paradigms. Although one may argue that the definition of this Latin word in Persian could be 'Urfi' as it is 'Almaniyah' in Arabic but I think there are issues which are beyond and over semantic niceties which need to be seriously discussed. For instance, 'Almaniyah' is translated as the equivalent to the notion of 'Secular' but in explanation of this term it is argued to mean 'unspiritual' and 'those who are not part of the clerical establishment and those who dedicated themselves to the *Corpus Christi*'. Interestingly enough, when you look at the political regime which is established by those who are 'unspiritual', both in Arabic and Persian as well as Turkish languages

you come across the concept of 'Laicism' as the core of this form of political order and this concept is translated as a 'regime which is based on the distinction between religion and politics'. This conceptualization is the core of many forms of misunderstandings within the Islamicate lebenswelt and few have attempted to pay systematic attention to these kinds of epistemological aberrations. In my view, the correct definition of Laicism is not a regime which distinguishes between religion and politics but a regime which distinguishes between the realm of politics and the ecclesiastical class and those who are at the service of *Corpus Christi*. But I think Arab Catholics from Levant, who earlier came across western texts and missionaries as well as scholars, did not distinguish between Christianity as a particular form of religion and religion as a general phenomenon. On the contrary, they took the Catholic meaning-system as their frame of reference and accordingly they introduced Christian terminologies into Arabic (and then Persian and Turkish and other Islamicate languages) without realizing that these concepts are paradigm-bounded and cannot be rendered as universal forms of conceptions. In other words, Laicism should not be taken as a regime which aims at the separation of religion from politics but rather as a regime which attempts to deprive clerical class from participating in the state affairs due to the fact that within the Catholic meaning-system the ecclesiastics considered for themselves a 'special privilege'. What was that special privilege? Within the Catholic meaning-system, those who dedicated themselves to *Corpus Christi* considered for themselves a higher authority and therefore implementation of that spiritual authority on people who, within Catholic theological system, are termed as 'Laics'. The Arab Christians did not discuss these delicate epistemological and theological issues and just focused on linguistic dimensions by finding good translations or inventing beautiful equivalents and by doing so they reduced complex issues to the level of neologism. The Shiite seminaries of Najaf and then Iran came across modern debates of philosophy and theology as well as law through these translations from European languages into Islamicate lebenswelt without realizing that there are issues which go beyond these lexical wrestling. These perplexities demonstrate themselves within the context of Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) where the social and political actors took different positions vis-à-vis the concept of 'constitution' and establishing two broad movements of 'Mashroteh' and 'Mashroeh' and the former came to be known as secularists and the latter as religionists. Later on this distinction took other aspects and forms of social life into their different spheres and by the rise of the Islamic Revolution of Iran (1979) the notion of 'spiritual privilege' crept into the Islamic meaning-system through the Catholic worldview which was already

incorporated within the symbolic dimensions of the modern Arabic language. (Al-Attas, 2014) These issues need to be inquired upon as the problems are not of linguistic significance but epistemological and theological as well as ontological questions are at stake and without confronting these problematiques we cannot get rid of perplexities which rule supreme in the Islamicate mind of Iranian intellectuals and scholars.

Laic as a concept

One of the most heated debates in Iran during the 20th and 21st century has been on the concept of 'Laic' which is employed in various religious, political, cultural and social contexts as a *demarcating marker* and many often is used interchangeably with the concept of secular which is taken without any problematization synonymous to the concept of 'Urfi'. For instance, if you observe the trajectories of these concepts in everyday life contexts then you may see those who have a 'religious' viewpoint use the concept of 'secular' as a derogatory term for describing scholars or thinkers and intellectuals who do not share the ideological assumptions and narratives of Islamism and the idea of Guardianship of the Jurist, one the one hand, and then, you could see others who have a 'non-religious' point of departure and they may, for instance, argue that 'I have no religious outlook but I am a secular person'. However, when you push the question further by asking what do you mean by 'secular' then he would take a Persian word for what he means by secular, i.e. the concept of 'Urfi'. Within this frame of reference, then we see categorizations which are interesting to reflect upon such as 'religious intellectuals' versus 'urfi intellectuals' or 'secular intellectuals' and these categorizations have created a milieu where the proponents of each of these systems cannot hold any meaningful dialog with one another. But the fundamental question is what does 'Laic' stand for? You may have a catholic reading of this concept but if we take an Islamic position and from that vantage point approach this concept then I think we may come to a different conclusion than the one we have in the Catholic worldview. A laic person within the Catholic frame of reference is someone who has not been able to dedicate her/himself completely to the spiritual dimension and hence is engaged in 'secular affairs' and therefore is a laic person in contrast to a spiritual person who is not engaged in secular affairs. What are these secular affairs? If you look at the Christian religion then you realize that Christ has a very key position in it but the Christ is not present and shall return to rescue humanity from misery and pain. (Gilbert, 1980) Now that we have no access to Jesus Christ the Lord, then how

could we as faithful Christians relate to the Lord? It is argued that the Church symbolizes the *Body of Christ* and we, as the faithful Christians, should dedicate ourselves to the *Corpus Christi*. But the question is that everybody is not able to do so and those who fall outside this total dedication then they are still considered as Christians but they are regarded as laics due to the fact that they are involved in *secular affairs* such as marriage, procreation, trade and worldly issues. However the question is not how this concept is employed in the Christian theological context but the main problem pursued here is whether this concept applicable to Islam (as a religion) and the Islamicate world (as a social constellation). I think this is a question which should be asked from an Iranian point of departure where by a theological/epistemological mistake certain intellectuals and thinkers have come to identify the dimension of Urf in terms of 'the secular' and then wrongly conceptualize the act as 'Laic' within the context of Iran (as a civilizational reality). Because if you look at Prophet Muhammad from the vector of the Christian church then you would judge him as a laic figure who was involved in secular affairs and even adjudicate secular matters and forbidden passions such as 'the art of love-making' and 'the art of trade and war-making'. In other words, if we take the Catholic vantage point as our point of departure then not only Muhammad is considered as a laic person but the whole Muslim world should be regarded as a laic realm of being. But Christianity is not the only valid form of religiosity and construction of religious worldview. To put it differently, we should conceptualize the Islamic theological point of view based on its inherent meaning-system and in this system the distinction is not built upon the 'spiritual' versus the 'secular'. On the contrary, in the Islamic meaning-system we are encountered by other demarcating markers such as 'Ghayb' and 'Shahadat' and these terms do not correspond to the dichotomies of spiritual and secular. They stand for the intellectual and the sensual respectively and have to do with levels of perception and not mysterious forms of relation to the 'Holy' and matters of daily affairs.

Urf: A conceptual makeover

It is my basic assumption that Islam seen from a Chsritian/Catholic perspective is a secular religion and within this Islamic context talking about secularization is, to say the least, very odd. The second assumption which should be clarified is the fact that in my reading the concept of 'Urf' is not synonymous to the concept of 'Secular'. As indicated above, in the Islamicate societies these two terms have come to mean similar and this is a grave mistake. This mistake is not only of a lexical character

but it has ontological/epistemological consequences due to the fact that 'Urf' is composed of three letters of 'U', 'R' and 'F' and these same letters are used in the constitution of the word of 'Knowing'. In other words, the basic sources within the Islamic tradition are the Book, the Tradition of Prophet (and Imams), the Consensus (of Scholars) and the Intellect and it is important to note that one of the most important dimensions of the intellect is 'Urf', i.e. what could be known by the common sense. To put it differently, to deprive the society of common sense it is to destruct the ability of harmonizing between the change and stability. That is to argue that by equating the concept of 'Urf' with the concept of the 'Secular', the politicized scholars have deprived the society from one of the most important aspects of intellectual capability. As argued earlier, the meaning-systems of Islam and Christianity are different and we cannot use the Catholic concepts in explaining the Islamic worldview and those who have done this, willy-nilly, brought havoc upon the Islamic/Iranian lebenswelt.

Conclusion

Why is it important to discuss the differences between the concept of *urf* and the *secular*? One of the popular theses in sociology of religion and philosophy is the *secularization thesis* which aimed to explain the historical transformations of human societies (Martin, 1979) based on the European lebenswelt. But this thesis has been contested and many scholars talk about the *re-publicity of religion*, i.e. the return of religion and the sacred to the public square. (Casanova, 1994) In other words, many contemporary scholars discuss the decline of secularity and the rise of public religiosity in the world but here it seems something is missing when we take the case of Iran where religion has come forward in a full-fledged manner. To put it differently, the distinction between sacred and secular (Somerville, 1998) or church and state seems inapplicable to the Iranian context as here we see the re-publicity of religion, on the one hand, and the decline of religiosity, on the other hand and this paradoxical phenomenon needs to be studied with other conceptual tools and one of the most significant tools which has been neglected is the distinction between the concept of *secular* and *urf*. In many secular contexts in Europe or America, we can conceptualize the re-publicity of religion in terms of intensity of religious commitment and reappearance of religious symbolism but in Iran we can witness opposite trends but these phenomena cannot be studied through the dichotomies of sacred and secular as these important concepts are not universal but context-bounded and of eurocentric origins. My point is that what we witness could be

understood in terms of reappearance of *urf* which is not tantamount to the secular and it is a source of cultural innovation which needs to be re-claimed in the constitution of self and society in Iran.

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